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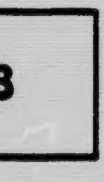

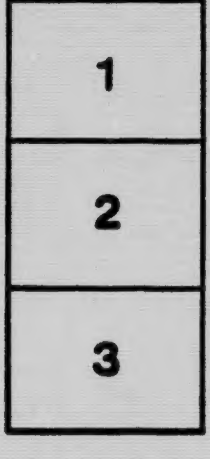

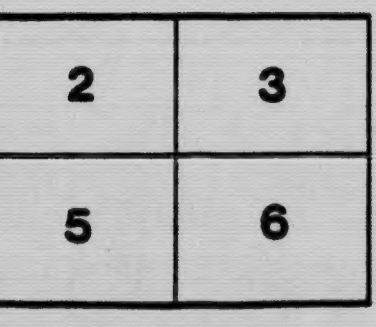

MATTHEW THE PUBLICAN AND HIS GOSPEL

ROLAND V. BINGHAM

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Calgary

MATTHEW THE PUBLICAN

MATTHEW
THE PUBLICAN
AND HIS GOSPEL

Demonstrating the rightful place of this Gospel According to Matthew as the initial book of the New Covenant of Jesus Christ and a true Gospel of the Grace of God

BY
ROWLAND VICTOR BINGHAM
Editor The Evangelical Christian

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MATTHEW THE PUBLICAN

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THIS book was begotten of several incidents in my life that conspired to press it on paper amidst the challenge of a work that has given me a busy career.

My acquaintance with Matthew seems to drop into three epochs.

When at the age of fifteen I disgraced my family by kneeling at an old Salvation Army penitent bench, although no one ever more fittingly knelt there, the first thing I did following my conversion was to buy myself a good teacher's Bible. I had no one to guide me, and so knelt by my bedside and opened the book at the New Testament. There I met Matthew, and he told me of One who was named Jesus because He came to save His people from their sins. And I did not doubt that I was one of those whom He came to save.

When Matthew pictured Him, following John the Baptist, and announcing the kingdom of heaven as at hand, I read on and saw Him preaching the kingdom as already come and

almost immediately declaring, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." I was so broken that I felt I had received this blessing.

When I read on, "Enter ye in by the strait gate," not only did I come that way, but soon found myself trying to get others in by the same narrow gateway, and not without some success.

When Matthew presented Christ preaching, "Everyone therefore that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them shall be likened to a wise man who built his house upon the rock," I sought to hear and do these words of Christ, and there came the assurance that I was building on the Rock.

And when under the urge of this Gospel I was moved to confess Christ before men, and to preach Him to men, I went to Matthew to find the most moving messages of warning and entreaty. In all language there is no more tender appeal than that contained in the sweet invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11: 28. And it worked, for men and women responded to it and were gloriously saved. They came in by the strait gate into the "kingdom" which I preached.

Yet the time came when I met those who protested that Matthew was not written for

sinners or saints, but for the Jews. It was Jewish and had no practical application to the Church. To use it as containing the Gospel for sinners, or its precepts as obligatory for saints, evidenced a serious lack of knowledge of the Scriptures.

It was at this second period that a unique opportunity came to me. A very godly, cultured minister invited me to his home to study, undertaking to give me daily instruction in the Scriptures and to guide me further in my studies. His life of faith and prayer was a benediction to me as a young man, and the whole experience meant more to me than a seminary course.

His daily expositions of the Scriptures were wonderfully rich. And following an hour's exegesis he outlined my studies for the day. He introduced me to Hodge's *Theology*, with its strong Calvinism, and then placed in my hands books by the so-called "Brethren," and I was soon revelling in the writings of C.H.M. with their typology of the Pentateuch; also in Kelly on the *Revelation*.

Never having listened to a single address on the Second Coming of Christ, I at once became infatuated with prophetic study. Had I been warned against systems of prophetic interpretation, and directed to the text of Scripture itself, I should have been saved much.

But I heard the constant repetition of the term "dispensational" interpretation of the Bible, and under this big word I had soon swallowed its whole method of dividing Biblical history into what were termed seven dispensations, in all of which God adopted a different method of dealing with the human race. Had they been just a succession of the great events of history, which by their outstanding importance gave a milestone mark through the progress of time, little harm might have been done.

Or had it divided history, as the Bible itself does, into Old and New Testament periods, in which God was dealing with the race under the Old and the New Covenant, respectively, no exception could be taken to such a division.

But gradually I found this method robbing me of more and more of my New Covenant heritage. First, Matthew was Jewish, and its great commission even belonged to the Jewish converts of the tribulation period. Then the other two Synoptic Gospels were soon following in a similar classification. With others, John's Gospel followed suit; and ere the process was complete, I was informed at last that the Pauline Epistles alone contained "Church Truth," and that the "Pauline Gospel" was the only Gospel for to-day. The Epistle to the Hebrews and the General

Epistles of James and Peter and John contained Jewish, not Church truth.

Not all the dispensational teachers go to the full extreme thus referred to, and commonly classed as Bullingerism, but it is difficult to find a stopping place en route, when once the principles of interpretation are admitted.

All of these teachers are strong in their affirmation of believing in the whole Bible, and inveigh against Modernism, but by a subtle process, which they commonly refer to as "rightly dividing the word of truth" (although an entirely wrong application of 2 Timothy 2: 15, in which Paul had no thought of such divisions), they rob the soul of large portions of Holy Writ—they may no longer be applied to those personal needs by which the believer is "sanctified through the truth."

As to Matthew, there would be quite general assent among these teachers to the following summary:

1. The Gospel of Matthew is peculiarly Jewish and contains the Gospel for Jews.
2. That it sets forth Christ as being heir to the throne of David, King of the Jews, and that He came to present Himself to them as such, and ready, if accepted, to set up that kingdom.

3. That it was this kingdom that was primarily proclaimed as "at hand."
4. That when the Jews refused Him, the kingdom announced was suspended, to be proclaimed anew after this Church Age is complete.
5. That "the Gospel of the Kingdom" has to do with that kingdom, and therefore has no place in this present Church Age, but will be proclaimed by Jews converted subsequent to the translation of the Church.
6. That the ethics of this book are the laws of the kingdom, and are no standard for the Church—that they express Law and not Grace.
7. That the eschatology or prophetic part of Matthew pertains also to the period after the Church is translated. That the Church has nothing to do with the signs given: she has but to watch momentarily for her Lord's return. To use the expression we have often heard these teachers use, "When Israel was set aside, the prophetic clock stopped."

There is one other proposition made by this school and that is, that the great commission with which this Gospel concludes is intended not for the Church, but will be taken up and preached after the Church is translated by a very

convenient and much-used "group" commonly referred to as "the Jewish remnant."

The reiteration of these propositions by such great and godly men whose names are known and beloved by the whole Church, many of them personally known and loved by me, had made their impression upon me and the second period of my life was largely dominated by this interpretation—although my deep missionary call under the terms of the great commission kept me from their final conclusion given above.

Then there came a sudden revelation which led to a revolution and an emancipation. And it all happened in a day, although there had been introductory premonitions. There were misgivings at some of the unnatural forced interpretations necessary in order to make every Scripture fit in to what I conceived to be its proper place in my dispensational chart. The "tribulation period" took care of a good many of the misfit passages, and was a great convenience.

My wife set the investigating machinery going one day by saying, "Rowland, where do you get the 'Secret Rapture' idea in the Bible? I have to teach the Second Coming to my class of young women on Sunday, and I have been hunting for some proof of

the 'Secret Rapture.'" I quite glibly replied, "First Thessalonians, four." "But," said she, "I have been reading that and it is about the noisiest thing I can find in my P· 'The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God.'" When you have a wife who cannot be bluffed, and who sees the camouflage when an excuse is put out instead of a reason, a lot of trouble can be made by presenting a very artless question. The weeks that followed that innocent query and the trouble into which it landed me is a separate story. If you hold the theory of a *Secret* Rapture of the Church, try out that simple question on yourself.

But you may not have someone who holds your theories on the defence until you prove them. I tried a second thrust by suggesting that there was the type of Enoch being secretly translated while Noah went through the judgment, to which there came the counter blow that knocked me out of the ring as she said, "You know, Rowland, that you cannot build a doctrine on a type?"

Later I said to that unsatisfied wife, "My teachers all affirmed that the Greek very clearly differentiates between the secret rapture of the Church and the public manifestation to the world. The word 'Parousia' always indicates the rapture, while 'Epiphanea'

always has to do with the appearing of Christ with His Church." I had heard those two Greek words so often adduced in evidence that it must be so. If you can only go over a few Greek words, it suffuses mystery and creates authority? But that help-meet of mine wanted to do what I had never done, check up on those two Greek words. And so there was nothing for it but to get out my Young's Concordance and turn up every text in which the word 'Parousia' occurred. And it smashed the theory of the Secret Rapture so hopelessly that I marvelled at the credulity with which I had swallowed my "authorities."

But to [illegible]e to my revolution by revelation in a day [illegible]n old friend had invited me for about the [illegible]wentieth time to come to help at his annu[illegible]l missionary conference at which [illegible] had quite generally given the special missionary sermon. A little while before the conference he wired to tell me that the Bible teacher upon whom he had relied had failed him, and he would look to me for the special teaching ministry of the week. Unwittingly, I consented.

The intervening days were so crowded with the pressure of my work that I could find no time for the special preparation needed, and the fateful morning arrived when I had to take the train for an all-day ride, with a

week's ministry staring me in the face at the end of the journey—and no message.

In sheer desperation I took out my Bible and threw myself helplessly on the Lord. And I know the blessed Illuminator, the Holy Spirit, responded. I commenced to read in Matthew, and all day long I read and re-read, with such an unveiling that my soul was filled to such overflowing that I wondered how I was going to find time in a week to pour out the inward wealth that was poured in that day.

But my old theories were being dispelled like mists before the sunshine. It means a great deal to have the cherished teaching of years upset in a day, and that without argument or human instrument. As time has gone by, our future study, freed from the system of interpretation which had dominated us so long, has only confirmed us in the conclusions reached that day. It may be well to summarize in antithesis the convictions reached that day:

1. That the "Gospel according to Matthew" was not "the Law according to Matthew." That it was the first book of the New Covenant, and not the last book of the Old.
2. That it was written for the Church in which already the middle wall of partition

between Jews and Gentiles had been broken down, as it had long before been abolished in the mind of Matthew. It is not a Jewish Gospel any more than the whole Bible is Jewish. Of course Matthew yearned for the salvation of his own countrymen and would do all that he could to reach them.

3. That Matthew in his Gospel does historically what Paul later on does philosophically in the ninth, tenth and eleventh chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, explain why the Jew was laid aside from his place of peculiar privilege, while God established a new kingdom.
4. That Christ did not come to establish the Throne of David or to re-establish the Jewish kingdom, but to set up the Kingdom of Heaven. That it was that kingdom that John proclaimed as at hand, and Christ confirmed and established.
5. That that kingdom was entered and accepted by multitudes, was begun in Christ's day, has never been suspended and will never pass away. Matt. 21: 31.
6. That that kingdom is now in mystery form, but will one day be manifested. That now Christ is "the King, eternal, immortal, *invisible*," and the kingdom of God is spiritual, "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

7. That the Gospel of the Kingdom is no other than the Gospel of Grace. That the Apostles continued to proclaim it in this Church Age, and that not as an outward Kingdom of Israel, but an inward Kingdom of Grace. Acts 20: 24, 25. Acts 28: 23, 28–31. Col. 1: 23, R.V. That it was this that our Lord gave to be proclaimed to all nations by His disciples. That He gave to them in three and a half years, and then after His resurrection expounded for forty days.
8. That the ethics of this book are the new law which the Spirit of God came to write upon the hearts of His people and to work out in their lives.
9. That the prophecies of the Book were intended to lighten the path of the Christian in this age, and that the predictions in Matthew are that "sure word of prophecy whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as a light that shineth in a dark place."

As the time has gone by, all my future study has confirmed me in the changed views of that day.

In the study of this book I cannot expect to carry with me all those whose cherished teaching of years it upsets. I simply in the whole prophetic sphere plead for that liberty

of interpretation which I gladly accord to others. Inasmuch as the study of this first book of the New Testament calls for confirmation in the closing book of Revelation it is but fair to say that while rejecting Futurism's division of that book decidedly there is much in their interpretation that I would accept in preference to the writings of the older historicists. It is a Book that is still unfolding and a sphere in which one cannot dogmatize, and wherein we still need to listen to what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

CHAPTER II

MATTHEW, THE MAN AND HIS MESSAGE

ALL that we know historically of Matthew is contained in a brief biographical paragraph in his Gospel, with a similar sketch by Mark and Luke, and the appearance of his name in each case in the list of the Apostles.

But the slight variations in the three records reveal the man as perhaps nothing else could have done. In his own record that which he tells and that on which he is silent are tremendously impressive.

Luke tells us two things that Matthew entirely forgets. First, that when this publican was sitting at the place of toll, tax gathering, and Jesus came that way with His challenge, "Follow me," Matthew *forsook all* and followed Him. He was the kind of man that delighted the heart of Christ. There were no reserves, no holding back and paying part of the price. He went all the way. Everything went in with Matthew. This is so rare to-day that the average Christian doesn't understand it. When thirty-five years ago Dr. Stirrett came to the writer at a time when our efforts to get into the Sudan seemed a forlorn hope,

and said, "Mr. Bingham, I have read your plea for the Central Sudan, and I feel that the work there must be done. If you don't think I'm the man to go, I want you to sell all my property and see that somebody else goes." We hadn't a man on the Mission Council that understood the man. They questioned his sanity, and for four years refused to accept his property and his stocks and bonds into the Mission treasury—and even declined the responsibility of accepting his application until he turned up on the field. Oh for a thousand Matthews to "forsake all" to follow Jesus! What a blessing our old doctor, who gave up his fortune and then put his life into the Sudan Interior Mission, has been!

And then Luke tells another thing that Matthew omits. Each narrative refers to a great feast that followed Matthew's conversion, but Luke alone tells the fact that Matthew footed the bill. It was Matthew that made the feast, and brought together that great crowd of publicans to meet his new Master. And it is Mark alone that lets us know that a lot of these publicans and sinners decided that day that they were going to follow Jesus too.

But Matthew does note that which to him that day revealed the heart of the Gospel. That it was in his own home that Jesus

announced the sweetest message on earth. As the religious leaders were denouncing a leader that would even eat with publicans and sinners that sweet reply came, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." And then in a day when there was no New Testament written he found a Gospel text in the Old, as he told them to "go and learn what this meaneth, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,'" and then announced the very purpose of His coming in the words so sweet to Matthew, "I come not to call the righteous, but sinners."

Matthew got in by the "strait gate" that day, and was never ashamed that he came in by the sinners' door. It became the heart of "the Gospel according to Matthew." There is no difference between that Gospel from Matthew's pen and that written by Paul. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Don't tell me that Matthew didn't understand the Gospel of the grace of God, when he heard the Lord Jesus rebuke the religious leaders of the day by saying, "Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." Matt. 21: 31.

To the Jew that word "publican" summed up all that was despicable and detestable. They were the off-scouring of the earth. And Matthew knew it.

When Paul sought to magnify grace and occupy front rank among sinners saved by saying, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and then added, "Of whom I am chief," he was outdone and outrun by Matthew. For when Matthew was writing out the list of the twelve chosen by Christ as Apostles, why, oh why, when he comes to his own name does he not leave it just plain "Matthew?" That was the way Mark did it, and so did Luke. Why did he not put it in, "Matthew the Apostle?" No! There it is for all time, "Matthew, the Publican." Why did he not stick in "Peter, the fisherman?" No! Solitary and alone he writes it, "Matthew, the Publican." This was surely a time for magnifying the office when announcing the appointing of the twelve Apostles. This would be the occasion for bringing out all the college regalia, and putting on all the paraphernalia that marks the degrees. But Matthew is the only one with his degree attached. "*Matthew, the Publican.*" And yet some of these teachers of to-day would tell us not to go to Matthew if you want the Gospel of the Grace of God. And these same teachers don't know how to smile at themselves as they seriously tell us that Matthew wrote specially to the Jews. Matthew, *the Publican*, writing specially to the Jews!!

Matthew belonged to the publican and sinner class, and Matthew was writing a Gospel for sinners, Jew and Gentile alike.

It is "The Gospel According to Matthew," not "The Law According to Matthew." It is the first book in

THE NEW COVENANT
commonly called
THE NEW TESTAMENT
of
OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR
JESUS CHRIST

It is not an appendage to the Old Testament, but rightly the initial book of the New.

But why should Matthew be chosen to write this first Gospel of the New Testament? He is the last man in the world to select to make a theological approach to the Jewish people. Every door would be barred, every heart closed to Matthew, the Publican. But if God wanted an instrument to show why the Old Covenant was superseded and set aside, while the New was introduced and justified, then no one was better fitted than Matthew.

In his later Gospel we believe John had Matthew's open before him, and that he really summed up Matthew in that wonderful statement, "He came unto His own, and His

own received Him not, but to as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God."

With the simple narrative of the life of Christ, Matthew tells historically that which Paul describes philosophically in Rom. 9, 10, 11, how an elect nation became a rejected one—why Israel lost their place of peculiar privilege, and their right, confiscated, was passed on to another people.[1]

Forced, as he had been, to take employment under their Roman rulers, he had felt the bitter hatred of his own people and had seen them at their worst; while compelled thereby to find his only fellowship among Gentile sinners, he had discovered thereby the common level of all who are in Adam as sinners and had seen revealed the need of a common Saviour for all.

While Matthew knew the Scriptures and the promises and privileges of Israel, he also knew and could quote the promises of blessing for the Gentiles. He mentions the Gentiles more than any other writer.

It is he who calls attention to the fact that our Lord's ministry really began in Galilee of the Gentiles, and that there "the people who sat in darkness saw a great light;

[1] We are not forgetting that the process will once more be changed in the coming age when a repentant Israel will again be grafted into the old stock once more. And that we stand today by faith.

and to them who sat in the region and shadow of death, to them did light spring up." It was "from that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matt. 4: 16, 17.

And it is Matthew, who emphasized the fact that Christ's ministry commenced in Galilee of the Gentiles, who stressed that it was to this same Galilee of the Gentiles that Christ commanded all his followers to go and meet Him following His resurrection. Matt. 26: 32; 28: 7, 10, 16. There He concluded His ministry by teaching them for forty days more the things of the kingdom, and by giving them their commission to go and make disciples of all the nations. Matt. 28: 16, 19.

Matthew, a renegade Jew, writes the Gospel according to Matthew, and indicates that from Jesus Christ he was commissioned to give that Gospel not to Jews only but to all nations. Glad tidings for sinners and for saints. And all that we hear from the meagre references in ecclesiastical history to this man, his life was spent in fulfilling that commission —in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and then with his face fixed to "the uttermost parts of the earth."

CHAPTER III

A STRANGE INTRODUCTION IF MATTHEW WROTE SPECIALLY FOR JEWS

THE fair consideration of the first chapter of Matthew would explode at once and for ever the idea that Matthew wrote specially to win Jews. He wrote with the whole religious history of the nation as related to Jesus Christ naked and open before him. And his Gospel is interwoven with the records of the Jewish people, led by their religious leaders, setting themselves in ever-increasing antipathy against the Christ and His claims.

From the first enquiry of those Gentile Magi of the Far East, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" when he records that "Herod was troubled and all Jerusalem with him," right on to that climax, when, led by their religious leaders (Matt. 27: 20) they demand of Pilate that he release the robber, Barabbas, and crucify the Christ—when they freed Pilate from his judicial responsibility as he washed his hands in feigned innocency, as all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children," Matthew had

traced the whole process that led his people to make their fateful choice with an unbroken chain of evidence of their guilt such as has been unexcelled in the records of any criminal court of the world.

As surely as Mark's Gospel was written with the last section of Isaiah's prophecy open before him (Mark 1: 2, R.V.) so Matthew had before him the opening chapters of the same prophecy. If he had taken as his text, Isaiah 9: 16, "For they that lead this people cause them to err: and they that are led of them are destroyed," no preacher ever held more faithfully to his text than did Matthew. He traces their whole attitude of culpable antagonism from the time when from their own Scriptures the time and the place of Christ's coming was evidently known to them as they indicated clearly to Herod (Matt. 2: 4-6), but when they did not go with or follow the wise men to worship and to welcome the Christ, right on through till they stood mocking Him on the cross and buying the soldiers to their lying declaration following His resurrection, he arraigns the religious leaders of the Jews.

The struggle between Christ and these blind leaders of Israel, as narrated by Matthew, is a thrilling story in itself. The intrigues, their subtle efforts at entanglement, the last plot and as they thought the ultimate success of their

efforts when He was finally crucified, all are thrillingly set forth and told by him. And he gets down to the devilish motive beneath and behind all the religious antagonism when he reports the thoughts of a politician like Pilate that "he knew that for ENVY they had delivered Him up."

Like Peter's sermon at Pentecost, Matthew's Gospel was designed to convict Jews rather than to win Jews. To convict them as the only hope of converting them. He is out to convict sinners of their sin of crucifying the Christ by the truth applied by the Holy Spirit that their eyes may be open to see the Saviour he proclaims.

Only thus can we understand his opening chapter. There is no aim here to avoid Jewish prejudices—he rather cuts right into them.

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ. What a declaration with which to open the New Testament! Away back in writing the Old Testament, after the story of the Creation and the Fall, Moses opens the fifth chapter with the statement: "*This is the book of the generation of Adam.*" And from that point on the book is occupied with the story of the seed and the entail of Adam. As he commences the story in that Chapter he says of each name added to the genealogical tree, "*and he died.*" Well does Paul sum up the whole entail of

that first man, "in Adam all die." 1 Cor. 15: 22.

But Matthew is beginning a new book, a new Covenant, a new Testament. And so the words, "*The book of the generation of Jesus Christ.*" All that comes out of this is the entail of Jesus Christ. "In Christ shall all be made alive." No other book and no other sentence could more fittingly open the New Testament than the words with which Matthew is led to open his Gospel. This is no Jewish introduction. If it is the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, then there can be no Jew nor Greek here. And we shall see that Matthew goes immediately to the further step that there can be neither male nor female. "All are one in Christ Jesus."

When he adds, "the son of David, the son of Abraham," he is not feeling around for a Jewish start. He seizes hold on the same two characters that Paul lays hold in his marvellous setting forth of the Gospel of Grace in the Epistle to the Romans, where in Chapter Four he makes it known that Abraham was saved before he was a Jew, and before he had received the old covenant sign and seal of circumcision. That as Paul there argues, Abraham was just as much the Father of the uncircumcised as of the circumcised. He boldly states it that he is the father of all them that believe.

Matthew is not bringing in Abraham and David here to prove Christ's title to a Jewish throne. He is doing here the exactly opposite. As far as Abraham is concerned, we seize hold again of the words of Paul in Romans 4, where he argues, "Not through the law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed, that he should be heir of the world, but through the righteousness of faith." Rom. 4: 13. It is no heir of a Davidic throne that Matthew is presenting. Not even the heir to the world, with Abraham, but the one who could say, "Before Abraham was I AM, the heir of all things."

Matthew opens his Gospel by showing that the life of Christ flowed back up the most accursed channel that he could select, carrying life, abundant life, wherever faith would open to it, to Him.

So he not only seizes hold of the two outstanding characters that Paul cites as samples of sinners made righteous by faith: but brings into the line that which would touch the racial pride of the Jew to the quick: and go deeper still in cutting into his masculine superiority complex.

For Matthew didn't need to cite these women in order to carry down the genealogy of Abraham and David to Christ. Why mention women at all? No Jew would. And then why, oh! why, bring in these unsavoury

women of Gentile race, this Tamar the harlot, and Rahab with the same unholy distinction, and Ruth the Moabitess: and then the last that he brings in but does not even name, the woman through whom David could lay claim to the title in the Old Testament which Paul avows in the New, and no one would dispute his right of being "chief of sinners."

Nothing that flowed in the veins of Adam ever purified that channel. Nothing but the back-wash, and we use the word reverently, nothing but the back-wash of Calvary could cleanse that turbid stream. And no one but Matthew, the Publican, would dare to link up such names and then add, "of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." The Gospel according to Matthew. Methinks when Matthew wrote this first chapter he knew as well as Paul that "the Scriptures foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles (heathen) by faith preached the Gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying in thee shall all the nations be blessed." Gal. 3: 9-11.

But Matthew is doing another desperate thing here. He is following down a line from Abraham that runs through Solomon and on through Jeconiah to Joseph. And of Jeconiah, or Coniah as it is given by Jeremiah, the prophet wrote:

"O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no more shall a man of his seed prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling in Judah." Jer. 22:30. See Verse 24.

Surely here there are no title deeds to the throne of David through natural descent. Matthew leads us down a blind alley. He brings us to an unbridgeable chasm of cursing.

And then he works a miracle, and brings us across. And he nearly smashed my theory or my faith in any verbal inspiration of the Scriptures in doing it. For read that innocent-looking seventeenth verse of Chapter One:

"So all the generations from Abraham unto David were fourteen generations; and from David to the carrying away to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the carrying away to Babylon unto the Christ fourteen generations."

Matthew intended you to check up and count. And so I counted. Should I have done so? It got me into trouble. The first section worked out all right, and the second was correct. But that third fourteen was a puzzler. It is no question of higher mathematics, or I might have dropped the matter. It was just a question of counting fourteen, and it didn't work out. So I went to the

Commentaries to see if they could enumerate better, and I found they didn't count at all. Just where I needed an explanation, as so often happens, they were silent. They did what I tried to do, dropped the problem and left it. But an unsolved problem is better faced than feared. Matthew said there were fourteen. How did he count them? I could not believe he had made a mistake here and be sure there were not many other mistakes in the Bible. So the question bothered me, challenged me, and then fascinated me and then brought a wonderful satisfaction. Matthew knew what he was doing when he propounded his mathematical riddle of three fourteens. He wasn't dropping out some missing links. Count over again that third group until you come to Jacob, number eleven, and then read in verse sixteen the words: "and Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ." Count them over, Jacob eleven, Joseph twelve, and you come to the dead end of Coniah's line, beyond which no Jew or Anglo-Israelite can produce a kingly name, and then Matthew jumps the gulf of despair and gives us Mary as number thirteen, and Jesus as number fourteen, the Christ. He puts a woman in the line and counts her. And more than that, the line that lost title in Joseph issues with a new title from Mary. "Of whom was born Jesus

who is called Christ." Every other man in that line from Abraham "begat" offspring, except Joseph.

Then Matthew, who has made this strange accounting, has to explain the occurrence: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise." Matt. 1: 18. "Not on that wise," commented that prince of expositors, Campbell Morgan, as Matthew pictured the line from Abraham to Joseph, "but 'on this wise:' 'Conceived in Mary—of the Holy Spirit.'" Verse 20. "She shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save His people from their sins."

And Matthew concludes this opening chapter by challenging all sinners to enter the door of hope by the way of faith—faith in an incarnate Christ, "God manifest in the flesh," "Immanuel, God with us." to the Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

And if our faith stumbles at the incarnation, it will be hardened at the crucifixion.

Matthew writes Genealogy from Abraham to Christ here. If he had chosen as his text for the book, "Abraham had two sons one by the bond woman and one by the free," one born of unbelief and the other born of faith, he could not have depicted the struggle of

the two seeds more perfectly than in the story of this book—THE GOSPEL according to Matthew. Matthew wrote the earthly history and Paul the heavenly philosophy of one Person from whom to a lost world there comes one GOSPEL.

CHAPTER IV

THE GOSPEL, THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM

THE Gospel is the good news that tells the way back for a race estranged from the Creator and lost through sin, into the favour and fellowship of a holy God. The way from the guilt and burden of transgression and its penalty death: the way out of the bondage of despair, and the filth and defilement of sin: the path back from estrangement and hate; into life and peace, into freedom and hope; into purity and holiness; into love and fellowship and eternal relationship with God our Father—this is the Gospel and this is what Matthew tells us. If we had no other book than the Gospel according to Matthew, faith could find its way up from the depths of sin and death into life and fellowship with God.[1]

But this fact is being challenged to-day. And good people still imply that Matthew's Gospel is the "Gospel of the Kingdom," as though it is something different to the Gospel

[1] We say this advisedly because we have seen savages of the lowest tribes on earth with lives transformed when the only Scripture they possessed was a single Gospel in their tongue.

of the grace of God. They like to contrast it to the Pauline Gospel, as they call it.

As a matter of fact, Luke uses the expression, "the Gospel of the Kingdom" exactly the same number of times that Matthew uses it. And each time it relates to our Lord's ministry of the Gospel. The first time the expression occurs is in Matthew 4: 23, where it reads: "Jesus went about in all Galilee (that Galilee of the Gentiles) teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people." Was it the Gospel, or was it not? Was He telling them the news that He was come to sit on the throne of David, to find out how many would line up with Him to "restore the kingdom to Israel?"

Was this Gospel of the Kingdom that of heaven that John had announced as "at hand" and Christ preached as present?

When John was in prison he sent one of his messengers to Jesus with the question, "Art thou He that should come, or look we for another?" Our Lord's answer to His tried servant was: "Go and tell John . . . the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them." Matt. 11: 5.

What was it that Jesus preached? The

Gospel of the Kingdom? Yes! THE GOSPEL! In that same chapter Matthew pictures Him as standing and crying, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!" And all through this age, and out through all nations, men have heard those sweet words, and have come to Him and have found rest. Is it the Gospel?

It is the Judaizing of this Gospel that has mystified it.

The Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven is the one and only Gospel. It is when one reads into it "the Kingdom of David" or "the Kingdom of Israel" that one gets befogged.

Man, who by the fall had become the slave of sin and Satan, fell from his heavenly estate and became an enemy and a rebel to the Kingdom and rule of Heaven. His heart was alienated and in rebellion against Immanuel. And it was this breach between man and his God that has been the source of all his miseries, and from which estate unless he be delivered he would derive his hell.

The whole story of the restoration to this lost estate and relationship constitutes the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven.

This "Gospel of the Kingdom" was to be preached in all the world for a witness unto all the nations; and we are told that this is a message that "a Jewish remnant" will preach

after the Church is translated. When Mark writes down the same discourse of our Lord, he simply states, "The Gospel must first be preached."

When our Lord had finished His redeeming work on the Cross, and rose from the dead, He spent the forty days with His disciples in "speaking the things concerning the Kingdom of God." Acts 1: 3.

Even then those disciples, before the coming of the Holy Spirit, still persisted with their question "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom unto Israel?" Our Lord turned them from that national consideration to His international commission of witnessing to the Gospel.

And when the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, the disciples took up that ministry of preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom everywhere.

That the formation of the Church at Pentecost brought a change in the message is best disproved by the fact that the one who is set forth by the school to whom we are referring as bringing a Gospel peculiar and separate from the other Apostles, namely, St. Paul, continues to the close of his ministry still preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Let anyone read carefully that last chapter of Acts, where Paul is seen so near his execution busy witnessing at Rome. What is he

preaching? When they came to his lodging, we are told he "expounded . . . testifying the Kingdom of God and the things concerning Jesus." Acts 28: 23. And the chapter concludes, "He abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling . . . preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Into that kingdom, which he affirmed as to its vital principle was "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," Paul believed every true Christian entered. As he wrote to his Colossian Gentile converts they had been "translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love." Col. 1: 13, R.V.

And so we need to make no apology to these modern teachers when we preach the Gospel of the Kingdom and invite sinners to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Or when we join in praying, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

But by these teachers we are set forth as not understanding w they call "Church truth". as distinguished from "Kingdom truth." Their air is one of greatly superior knowledge. Pityingly they say we do not distinguish between Church and Kingdom. One smiles as one hears them affirming so especially that Matthew is the Kingdom Gospel; although incidentally Matthew is the only one that mentions the Church.

Let us see what He has to say concerning the Church and the Kingdom. He narrates the story of Peter's great confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and then gives our Lord's answer: "Thou art Peter, And on this Rock will I build my Church: and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And I give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." Why did Christ link up the Church and the Kingdom here, as though they were synonymous?

Of course, we know that the word "Church" means one thing, and the meaning of the word "Kingdom" is something different. It is equally true that the words "Wife" and "Mother" have very different meanings, but they are quite generally connected in the same person.

Lest these friends may suggest that we are quibbling over words, we would ask them, as they elaborate on the entire difference between the Church and the Kingdom—the Kingdom of Heaven, one plain question, "When and where did Peter use the keys, and what did he do with hem?" He certainly did not dangle them on a girdle to show that he was Pope among the Apostles.

But how did he use the keys? Anyone that will be honest knows that he used them first on the day that these friends say the Church was constituted—on the day of Pentecost.

And he used the keys of the Kingdom to admit the first Jewish converts into the Church.

He certainly used them again at Samaria. Philip, who was preaching Christ there, was a man filled with the Spirit, and he knew and preached the Gospel. And yet, while people responded to his message in great numbers and great signs of healing attested its power, and "there was great joy in that city," yet we read there was something lacking, until Peter and John arrived on the scene. Then Peter prayed "that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet He was fallen upon none of them, only they had been baptized into the Name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands upon them and they received the Holy Spirit." Acts 8: 16, 17.

Philip was a true preacher of the Word, and yet until Peter came with the keys, the Samaritan Church was not constituted by the coming of the Spirit, by which alone they could be baptized into the one body.

And even then how slow Peter was to see the significance of the words of Christ, "On this Rock will I build my Church. And I give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom."

Keys are for opening—and Peter was so slow to see the significance of this wonderful privilege that Christ gave to him.

Three times God gave Peter that revelation

on the housetop, while the third division, the Gentile peoples, were knocking at his door waiting for him to bring his Kingdom keys to open the Church door for their admission.

Once more the Holy Spirit was outpoured as Peter preached to Cornelius and his Gentile crowd. "God gave unto them the Holy Spirit even as unto us."

Remember, it was in the presence of the great Apostle to the Gentiles that Peter made the tremendous claim of Acts 15: 7:

> "Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith."

Matthew is the one writer who really gives to us Church truth as set forth by our Lord. He lets us know that the entrance to the kingdom was under the same conditions as entrance into the Church. There is nothing obscure about the words, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye repent and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 18: 3.

The teachers we are referring to are so insistent on regeneration being essential to

membership in the true Church, and yet when you ask their reason for this they will cite the words of Christ to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3: 3. We do not object to their citing this great verse: but we do ask them to be consistent. When the same door opens into the same room, it matters little that that room is sometimes called the Church and at other times the Kingdom.

Again we know that we shall be told that we are confusing things that differ, and that we do not understand the principles of law and grace, the Church and the Kingdom. But we are going to cite Paul again in defence of Matthew.

When Paul invited the elders of the Church at Ephesus to meet him, that he might give an accounting of his ministry to them, and his farewell charge, we think he understood as much about the Gospel of grace and the preaching of the Kingdom as any of these modern teachers. And this was what he said:

"I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now I know that ye all among whom I went about preaching the kingdom shall see my face no more." Acts 20: 24, 25.

This Apostle to the Gentiles, this man who certainly knew Church truth, and who received his ministry from the Lord Jesus, is he all mixed up when he preaches to the same people the Gospel of the Grace of God—and the Kingdom, and in the same breath? To Jews and Greeks he preached these things—"repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts 20: 21.

When Matthew wrote his Gospel, he had not only studied the Church and the Kingdom at the feet of our Lord, had not only received the baptism of the Spirit by whose inspiration he wrote, but was undoubtedly present at the remarkable Council meeting at Jerusalem, when the great questions of Church and Kingdom, Law and Grace, Jew and Gentile relationships, were thought out and fought out in the presence of Peter, James and John—of Paul and Barnabas. Five times in that chapter it refers to the Apostles and elders. To suit their theories, effort is made to date Matthew earlier, but the one clear reference to date in the Church Fathers says that Matthew was writing his Gospel when Peter and Paul were in Rome.

Matthew was an inspired, enlightened Apostle when he wrote his Gospel. From the lips of Christ he tells of a kingdom proclaimed, first at hand, and then present, into which sinners were entering through the new

birth even as they entered the Church the same way.

He told of that kingdom working silently in a mystery now, but when the angels come at the harvest of this age, shining forth as manifest in the glory of God.

They knew him as having title to the throne of David, but in a greater and wider sense to be King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, as "heir of all things."

Every soul that was "humble and contrite" now entered into the kingdom here, and became citizens of heaven. Phil. 3: 20, R.V.

And as surely as Paul and Peter and John preached a kingdom into which every true believer could enter, so may we doubly preach the same kingdom when the mystery kingdom is so soon to give place to the manifest Kingdom of Heaven.

Not only have these modern teachers sought to mystify the difference between the Church and the Kingdom, but an equal divergence between the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God.

"Heaven" and "God" are two different words, but the "Kingdom of Heaven" and the "Kingdom of God" are the same thing, because over and over again the Apostles use the terms interchangeably. The first axiom of euclid or plane geometry is that things that are equal to the same thing are equal to one

another. And these three things are so equal, the one to the other, that they can be used interchangeably without question.

Let us proclaim the true way ever of entry into the Church and into the Kingdom of Heaven.

This has nothing to do with the question of the disciples, "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" The Children of Israel lost another kingdom through sin and disobedience. Their prophet foretold that in consequence they would abide many days "without king and without prince and without sacrifice . . . afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king, and shall come with fear unto the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days." Hosea 3: 4.

There is a Davidic kingdom and a throne of David and an Israelitish kingdom which will one day be restored to a repentant Israel. But that is an entirely different matter. Christ holds title to that throne as He does to all other kingdoms. One day all kings will acknowledge His overlordship and accept the reins of government from His hands. The special occupant of the throne of Israel is indicated by the prophets over and over again. Jer. 30: 9. Ezek. 34: 23, 24; 37: 24, 25, 27. Luke 1: 32. Hos. 3: 4. It is the confusing of this kingdom with the Kingdom of Heaven as

preached by Christ and the Apostles that has led to all the confusion. Here is a real place to distinguish between things that differ.

The Jews and Israel had already lost their earthly kingdom in Christ's day. But to them was still offered the privilege of entering in and of precedence in proclaiming the Kingdom of Heaven.

But it was when the leaders of the nation rejected that privilege, when according to Matthew, Christ made the specific charge:

"Ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye enter not in yourselves: neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter," (Matt. 23: 13)

that he passed on their privilege to others.

As Nathan led David to pronounce on his own guilt and then pointed to him and declared, "Thou art the man," so Christ let these religious leaders pronounce their own condemnation upon the guilty parties in the story He told, as they declared He will miserably destroy those miserable men. Then Christ rendered the judgment as He solemnly declared, "Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Matt. 21: 41-43.

To what people was it given? Was Peter after he had used his keys to the fullest extent and opened the Kingdom of God to all

believers writing by the Holy Spirit when he did what he had heard his Lord do, link up the foundation of the Church with the Kingdom of God? When he referred to Christ as "A living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, unto whom coming, ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ," was the spiritual house built on that Living Stone, the Church? And then was he mixed in his metaphors when after referring to Israel's stumbling over that stone, he continued, "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession." 1 Pet. 2: 4-10. He concludes by saying, "Who in time past were no people but now are THE PEOPLE OF GOD." Were they in the Church or Kingdom or both?

CHAPTER V

MATTHEW AND THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (Matthew 5. 6. 7)

ALL that Sinai and the giving of the Law was to Israel, that and much more the giving of this sermon was to the disciples of Christ.

The very fact that the attempt to make this primary and all-important message of our Lord to His disciples of but secondary application to the Church to-day warranted the protest that is now being sent forth in many directions by true believers against such interpretation.

Quite glibly have they said that the Sermon on the Mount is not for the Church: that its ethics are law and not grace: that its sample prayer is not a pattern prayer for the Christian: that the golden rule affords no present standard of living: that its economics of laying up treasure in heaven instead of on earth and its "lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth" provokes a repetition by the would-be religious man of "this is a hard saying, who can hear it."

Much more, under the pretext of "rightly dividing," they have robbed of present application to Christians, and have passed it on to

this so-called Jewish remnant in the tribulation period, when they affirm this "kingdom truth" will be "apropos."

Entering in by the narrow gate is not grace, they say, and then hearing and doing the teaching of Christ is legalistic whereas salvation is free and not of works.

And yet this sermon is or is not included in the message Christ commanded when He bade His disciples to make disciples out of all the nations, and then added, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age." If you answer that this is not for us to-day in all its fullest teaching and application, we challenge your authority.

Put the New Testament into the hands of the most cultured at home or into the hands of the lowest savage abroad, and reading the book he would never surmise from its reading such an interpretation as these modern men of less than a hundred years of history read into this book. And the book which these people read, often guided by no other teacher than the unseen Holy Spirit, works a miracle in their lives.

But take some of these outstanding features in this marvellous Sermon on the Mount, and ask why there should be exception taken to present application.

First, the opening Beatitude leads us right into the Kingdom of Heaven by terms that are possible to all. "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Matt. 5: 3. This is in perfect harmony with the Old Testament forecast when God says, "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of contrite and humble spirit." Isa. 57: 15.

These Beatitudes lead us from spiritual poverty to a new relationship with God, that enriches us beyond all past thought: and this by way of the Cross. Grace is the key of entrance to the riches of the Sermon on the Mount.

Someone has translated this word "Blessed" as "Bliss that abides." And our Lord introduced these "poor in spirit" men and women into such an abiding bliss that under circumstances the most trying to human nature they could in the strength of this divine Beatitude "rejoice and ever rejoice."

Surely the grace that condescended to open the Kingdom of Heaven to all that are poor or broken in spirit in this first Beatitude will minister to those thus brought in all that is necessary to enable the humblest believer to enjoy all the marvellous steps in this sequence of blessings.

But objection is made that this sermon is law and not grace. These preachers forget that one of the great purposes of grace is to

realize and meet the demands of a holy law. As Paul put it, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

That the humanly impossible is constantly demanded in this marvellous law is not denied, because in the whole background the presence of the Almighty God, an omnipotent Saviour, and an ever operative Holy Spirit are so manifestly in evidence. F. B. Meyer used to say, "We never test the resources of God until we attempt the impossible."

And such righteousness is here demanded that no effort of man can ever attain it—it must be obtained from God. Matt. 6: 33. And it is in this sermon that Luke tells us that Christ offered the Holy Spirit to all who would ask, seek, knock. Luke 11: 13. He sweeps aside as inadequate all religiousness that consists of doing outward acts—"righteousness before men" (Matt. 6: 1), almsgiving, praying or fasting.

All that religiousness for which Scribes and Pharisees were renowned, and of which they gloried, would not provide enough merit to purchase an entrance ticket into the Kingdom of Heaven. Matt. 5: 20. And it is Matthew who supplements this utterance excluding these religious leaders from entrance into the Kingdom (Matt. 5: 20), who gives the positive declaration from our Lord's lips that "the

publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you." Matt. 21: 31.

Not only does he condemn the lowering in the least of the ethical code of the Old Testament, gauging our ranking position in the Kingdom of Heaven by our zeal both for keeping and teaching both its greater and smaller precepts, but he raises higher its moral plane in every sphere. Matt. 5: 21, 22, 27, 28, 38, 39, 43, 44.

When Scofield in his Bible says, "The Sermon on the Mount is law and not grace, for it demands as the condition of blessing (Matt. 5: 3-9) that perfect character which grace, through divine power, creates" (Gal. 5: 22, 23), he makes a great mistake. And when he interprets this same sermon as "Law brought to its highest degree of death-dealing potency," he misapprehends the whole purpose of this utterance from the lips of our Saviour.

If the Psalmist could say, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul," surely here the greater than Moses introduces the essence of the perfect law, not in death-dealing potency but in life-giving relationship, as He opens the Kingdom of Heaven to all who are poor in spirit as distinguished from the proud in heart. When He pictures the way of life as a door He writes on the door, "Knock and it shall be opened unto you," and doubly

emphasizes this invitation of grace by repeating, "To him that knocketh it shall be opened." Matt. 7: 7-8.

Though he pictures again the entrance as a narrow gate, he writes across the top a universal invitation in the moving words, "Enter ye in by the strait gate" (Matt. 7: 13), and then in large writ we read:

THE GATE . . . THAT LEADETH UNTO LIFE (Matt. 7: 14)

Then these teachers who miss the purpose of that sweet word with which this sermon opens, the

BLESSED
of
GRACE

instead of the curse of the law, misapprehend the intent of its closing illustration, and because our Lord said, "Every one that heareth these sayings of mine and *doeth* them," they ring out their slogan of "law and not grace," and imply that in this vivid story of our Lord He was setting forth something that was foreign to the Rock faith on which His Church was to be built.

In translating the Scriptures into many of our African languages, it is hard to find words that set forth abstract terms such as "faith"

and "hope" and even "love." And in more than one language the term "faith" has been rendered in the very words which our Lord uses here, "hearing and doing."

And it was the eliminating of this element from true faith that caused James to challenge spurious faith to evidence itself by its works. An unfortunate rendering of the last verse in that wonderful Gospel chapter of John three (verse 36) has robbed our Lord's word there of its true point. The Revised Version makes it plain when it reads:

"He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life: but he that OBEYETH NOT THE SON shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

This is in the greatest Gospel chapter of the Bible, but John perfectly agrees with Matthew.

True faith has as one of its constituent parts obedience to the One in whom we profess to believe. Acts 14: 1, 2.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the writer, speaking of Christ, says, "Though He was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became unto all them that OBEY HIM the author of eternal salvation." Heb. 5: 8, 9.

This is not grace distinguished from law, but true faith distinguished from the spurious.

"Every one therefore that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them shall be

likened to a wise man that buildeth his house upon the rock." And the Rock still stands.

But it is upon our Lord's teaching on Prayer and Perfection that so-called dispensationalism has exercised its ingenuity to avoid doing the things that He enjoined our hearing and doing.

Our Lord gave His disciples the secret of true prayer, and bestowed on them the power of its ministry.

He scathingly arraigns the prayer of the religious hypocrite because its sole purpose was not to reach the ear of God, but to be "seen of men."

And then He scored the prayer of the heathen because its virtue was in vain repetitions and their merit in their length.

Then He leads these "blessed-are-the-poor-in-spirit" disciples who have entered the Kingdom of Heaven into a relationship entirely unknown hitherto. He bids them to know God as their Father, and in prayer to take the attitude of a trustful child to its parent.

It is true that David had said that "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." Psa. 103:13. And in the 89th Psalm the inspired writer declares that David shall cry unto Jehovah, "Thou art my Father, My God, and the rock of my salvation." Verse 26.

Moreover, Isaiah thrice takes that name of "Father" and applies it to God. But nowhere in all the succession of Old Testament worthies was the intimacy of relationship with God implied, as that into which Christ immediately leads His disciples in this first lesson in true prayer. He bids them shut out all thought of religiousness in its appearance before men, by entering their inner chamber and claiming relationship as they are bidden to "pray to thy Father who is in secret."

And the long prayers of the heathen were to be supplanted by the knowledge of the intimacy of God with our lives as He informs them, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him." Then by a prayer so brief that its recital only covered a few seconds of time: and yet so broad that it comprehended their universal need, He led them into the tremendous accomplishments of prayer, as He simply said, "After this manner, therefore, pray ye." Matt. 6: 9.

But these interpreters to who we refer, under the pretext of "rightly dividing," inform us that this is not a prayer for Christians. But when you pin them down to declare for whom it was intended, they will say something about its being Jewish, and that it will come into exercise after the Church is taken away, in the "tribulation period." And that "tribulation period" reminds us of the "clutter

closet" which some housewives use to sweep out of the way all that doesn't fit into their poor household scheme.

Still insist on their giving a reason for thus arbitrarily nullifying the words of our Lord, "After this manner pray ye," they will reiterate their assertion that it is Jewish and affirm that it is law and not grace. They point to one little sentence where it says, "Forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors." Matt. 6: 12 (R.V.) Whereas our Lord singles out that one petition alone for His own interpretation, as He affirms the true law of His kingdom into which these Christians were brought: "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."[1]

It was later when Matthew was narrating the words of Christ touching relationships in the Church (Matt. 18: 15-20) that Peter propounds the question of forgiveness to Him in the words, "Lord, how oft shall my brother

[1]It is a wonder that Matthew, who wrote these words long after the true Church of Jews and Gentiles had been formed, didn't antedate these Bibles with footnotes (that sometimes nullify the true teaching) and enlighten us with a comment, that this our Lord spake not to the twelve Apostles as the twelve foundation stones of His church, but for a few people who would come into being two thousand years later, and pray this prayer for seven years when it would become obsolete. Think of Peter saying to John, "He doesn't mean us to use that pattern prayer now. It doesn't apply to us." Or think of Matthew saying to Mark, "We mustn't pass this pattern petition on to our young converts, because it really doesn't apply to them."

sin against me and I forgive him?" And after Christ had swept away Peter's proposition of seven times, with His assertion of forgiveness for seventy times seven, He gives the parable of the man who owed ten million dollars, and when he could not pay was freely forgiven. (Was that grace?) But immediately he turns and demands full payment of a poor man who only owed him less than $20.00, and refuses to forgive. Then the Lord who had forgiven his ten million dollar debt, turns in anger and throws him back into the debtor's dungeon, with the words from our Lord's lips, "So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts." Matt. 18: 35.

Our Lord is not dealing with hair-splitting theological theories of law and grace, but with the eternal principles of truth. They who talk of the grace of God to them, and will not manifest the grace of God to men, are deceiving themselves if they think that they dwell in safety. Their faith is vain! No man can truly appropriate grace from God without showing grace to man. Christ in His prayer pattern commits His followers to that daily attitude of forgiveness to man that they may receive the daily forgiveness of God.

And then these interpreters say that it cannot be a Christian prayer because it has not the attachment of the Mediator's name

at the conclusion. They are blind to the fact that the Name was not needed at the conclusion because it was introduced at the beginning. He did not teach these disciples to pray, "My Father." But linking Himself with them in their very approach to God, He taught them to come with Him to the Father as He said, "When ye pray say, OUR FATHER."

And He never taught them this marvellous approach except that He already regarded them as children of God. It is the Lord's prayer as taught His disciples who in using it made it the children's prayer.

And because it was our Lord's prayer, there is no prayer like it in covering all the need of the human soul and all the demand of our Father God.

Moreover, no prayer promises even in those exquisite discourses of Christ recorded solely by John (John 15 *et seq.*) contain more sweeping implications to the intercessor than those given in this sermon of Christ by Matthew, as he catches the words from His lips: Ask! Seek! Knock! repeated with the double affirmation:

> "For every one that asketh receiveth, and He that seeketh findeth, and to Him that knocketh it shall be opened." Matt. 7: 7–8.

And in the verses that follow every encouragement possible is given to move the

Christian to ask and expect from the Heavenly Father the supply of need in answer to prayer—and that on the basis of assured relationship, "How much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" Matt. 7: 11.

And then if the forgiveness clause in the Lord's prayer introduces the negative condition of successful prayer, following the above climax to His prayer promise our Lord interjects the positive condition to prayer power when He immediately adds the "Golden Rule" clause:

"All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets." Matt. 7: 12.

Again with the hue and cry that this is law and not grace, these modern teachers have undermined to Christians the application of a principle that in its exercise has done more to furnish saving salt in the modern social fabric than all the political panaceas combined. And this precept practised by those inside the Church and Kingdom would go a long way toward bringing a new revival. It breathes the spirit of Christian communism, which is as high as the heavens above the earth or hell from the communism of the Soviet.

And then our Lord's teaching on Perfection! Of course, when He says:

"Ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." Matt. 5: 48.

as the consummation of His series of commandments that in each case were to excel the highest law of Moses, He was enjoining the impossible—if it was to be produced by the mere natural man.

But the demand is of those who had entered the Kingdom of Heaven and had become sons of the Kingdom. When He says, "Love your enemies," He adds, "that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5: 44, 45.

James and John would call down fire from heaven on their enemies as the "sons of Zebedee." But when John could write, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God," then he became the Apostle of Love. He saw that "Every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God." 1 John 4: 7.

We gladly admit that the standard that Christ here raised, this standard of perfection, not only in the outward act but in the inner motion and motive, is utterly impossible to any son of Adam. We are quite sure that it involves the creating of a new heart and a right spirit within: and the incoming of the Holy Spirit of God into the heart and life of man.

But that is "the Gospel of the Kingdom." "How much more shall your heavenly Father

GIVE the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Luke 11: 13. This He promises to His children.

We enter that very domain where the same God rules who "maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." Matt. 5: 45. And moreover, we come to see there that it is the only wise thing to do: and the only law by which this world could have remained habitable or endurable. Withhold the sun from the farm of every evil man, and cut off the rain from the land of all that are unjust, and if there were any good and just men left their farms would be unlivable, surrounded as they would be by the darkness of death and the dryness of hell on every side.

And only because the "sons of the Kingdom" are here, and in the measure that they have been the "salt of the earth" and "the light of the world," as here enjoined by Christ, has the race been restrained from becoming a slough of moral corruption and the nations held back from murderous extinction.

We are not ignorant of Paul's teaching to Galatian Christians concerning law and grace, nor of the magnificent setting forth of the two in the Epistle to the Hebrews. But neither there or elsewhere do the Scriptures teach that the Christian is not under law to Christ.

Rather that by the power of the constrainment of divine life and love the Christian is empowered to a higher law and life than were possible under a covenant that commanded but did not empower.

In this whole Sermon on the Mount one meets with the One whom Moses met on Sinai: but here He is not writing law upon tablets of stone, but upon the table of the heart. And when this New Covenant is thus inscribed, by its very transforming power we cannot but say, "A greater than Moses is here." The glory of this law is the unveiling of the face of its giver. And beholding Him, our faces receive no fading glory, but in His light and His law we are transformed from glory to glory by the Lord, the Spirit. We enter into a law of life, of light, of liberty and love. 2 Cor. 3: 1-18. This is the New Covenant.

CHAPTER VI

MATTHEW AND THE MIRACLES

MATTHEW again and again records the fact that "there came unto him great multitudes having with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at his feet and he healed them, insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, and the lame walking and the blind seeing." Matt. 15: 30, 31.

And yet out of the vast numbers that were evidently healed he only recites the individual cases of less than a score.

When the religious leaders came, saying, "Teacher, we would see a sign from thee," he declined to gratify their request and rebuked their morbid curiosity. Matt 12: 38.

But when he first commissioned the twelve, he said, "As ye go preach, saying The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons: freely ye have received, freely give." Matt. 10: 7, 8.

That the main purpose in the selection of these healing miracles by Matthew was the spiritual lessons involved, as well as the

attestation of the Deity of the One who wrought them, is clearly evident.

That he observed the commissioning of the twelve to work miracles in that which was most evidently intended as a limited commission: and then in the great commission which was to give to the Church its age-long task omits any mention of this is very significant. And although Mark does record a more limited authorization of these miracle works they are there distinctly indicated as signs for the establishing of the authority of the Gospel (Mark 16: 17, 18) even as Paul also indicates in his reference to their exercise. Heb. 2: 4.

We are not arguing against the continuance of these miracles as signs when needed: or that the Holy Spirit has not power to use the miracle gifts that are vested in His sovereign power in this age. We believe that He has and is manifesting these powers and giving these gifts in our day where such exhibition is needed for the glory of God and the blessing of the Church.

Moreover, just as in our Lord's time in preaching His first sermon at Nazareth, He chides the people that in Elisha's day with many lepers in Israel none were cleansed save Naaman the Syrian: so we have no doubt that in the sphere of the Church, as in Israel, He would have cause to chide us for our little faith, that in multitudes of cases where His

omnipotence could be displayed for the convincing of the world and the blessing of His people it is missing through our unbelief.

As he opens the record of His miracles with the expression of His will and manifestation of His love in the cleansing of the leper so He would chide us that to-day there are so many lepers and so little display of His power in the Churches, so little living contact with the multitudes that need His cleansing right now.

While we do not believe that the modern use of chamulgra oil for the curing of leprosy is displeasing to God or contrary to His will, we are sure that faith in God and the use of the anointing oil enjoined in the Scriptures would more often produce results and furnish indisputable testimony to the presence of the living, omnipotent Christ than is at present seen.

The marvellous story of the cleansing of Mary Reed of her leprosy in our own generation indicates the present possibility of faith.

And when Matthew, in his second narration of Christ's power to heal, cites the story of the healing of the centurion's servant, and Christ's marvel as he exclaims, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel," he would arouse us again to the possibilities of faith in the sphere of bodily healing. The centurion touched the heart of Christ as he expressed his confidence that the healing

touch of our Lord could reach any distance if he would "only say the word" or in the other version "speak the word only."

That implicit faith in the command of Christ and in His promise is all too rare, but where in evidence it is still always operative.

> "Thy touch hath still its ancient power,
> No word from Thee can fruitless fall."

While the discoveries of science in our day are now working miracles in the marvellous healings through natural forces, there is a limit beyond which it cannot pass. It is here that the power of Christ is still challenged and right here again and again operates in such a way that the miracle sign still compels men to admit this is the finger of God.

The Christ on the throne is no more indifferent to the suffering and sorrows of His people than when He was on earth. And, the going forth of His power, will reach as readily from heaven to earth as over the shorter distance involved when the centurion bade Him to speak the word only and his servant would be healed.

Right in the beginning of his record of the miracles of healing Matthew introduces a word which may well guide us as to the privileges and the limitation of His healing to-day.

In the record of that first healing day Matthew writes, "He healed all that were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases." Matt. 8: 17.

Healing cults have secured hold of this verse and have sought to use it as a sweeping declaration of a covenant of healing. They have linked the statement with 1 Peter 2: 24 where it says, "Who his own self bare our sins in his body on the tree," and declared that as He bare our sins so He bare our sicknesses in one great atoning act, that so we might be delivered from sin and sickness.

We would point out that the acts that "fulfilled" this saying of Isaiah's were three years before His death on Calvary. Secondly that sickness never called for atonement as it did not necessarily involve moral wrong as Christ pointed out, when they asked Him, "Who did sin, this man or his parents that he should be born blind," and Christ gave the strong negative reply that neither was guilty.

Moreover when Matthew lifted these words over from Isaiah to the New Testament he makes a very significant change in words.

The Greek has two words translated "bare," the one which Isaiah uses, which is quite commonly associated with propitiation and atonement, while the other word "bare" is

never so used, but always connected with sympathetic bearing, as in such passages as: "Ye that are strong ought to *bear* the infirmities of the weak," and "bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ."

Matthew here makes the significant change, dropping the word which Isaiah used for the word involving sympathetic bearing.

That there are benefits that will ultimately flow from Calvary which will reach "far as the curse is found" we have no doubt. Sin certainly brought death, and the death of Christ for us will one day banish "death" for ever in the glorious resurrection. But this verse in Matthew gives us no recipe for the present banishment of sickness.

But it does bring a sympathetic Christ into the sphere of human sickness and suffering, and His ear is still open to the "prayer of faith" which will still "save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up." However, both the Scriptures and experience teach us that the prayer of faith cannot be prayed at will, and that the healing of the sick is not invariably the will of God.

But while we deprecate the building up on this verse of a healing theory and point to the well-nigh utter failure of the healing cults to demonstrate that healing is for all, we cannot but affirm that the healing Christ would much

more frequently intervene if He were recognized and sought. As far as His power is concerned it is unchanged, and when His will is ascertained faith can relate itself to that power to appropriate whatever be the needed blessing.

Miracles of healing did not cease with the Apostolic Age except where the Church declined in her spiritual power. And wherever the Holy Spirit in His gracious sovereignty sees that the glory of Christ will be enhanced thereby and the Church be gathered out and built up He still exercises the healing touch in response to faith.

He is not at the beck and call of healing fakirs who desire to enhance their own glory and magnetism thereby. But He does respond to the humblest child of God who prays the prayer of faith.

CHAPTER VII

THE PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

GATHERED into one chapter Matthew groups seven parables of the Kingdom of Heaven.

It was most evidently the intent of Christ to reveal to his own people therein something concerning the character and history of the Kingdom of Heaven that should by their parable form be obscured to those who took no interest in that kingdom, and yet be manifestly clear to his own followers.

Two of them he undertook to interpret himself for them that the principles revealed thereby might give them a key for the understanding of the whole.

The first, the parable of the sower, set forth the principles upon which the Kingdom of Heaven would be promulgated and established. It was not to be like earthly kingdoms built up by the sword. Instead it was to be by the proclamation of its principles, by the preaching of the Word of God. The acceptance or rejection of the truth was within the power of the individual who, listening, could either embrace and hold fast its truths or steel the heart and close the life against them.

In its initial sowing, in which our Lord was Himself most evidently the sower, He indicated that three out of four might present such heart conditions that the seed would find no lasting rootage within them. The hindrances to the acceptance of the truth are simply but searchingly revealed. But to others that truth would come as good seed in good soil and spring up and bring forth such fruitage as to make possible an ever widening sowing of good seed.

The second parable shows not only the variable character of the soil as determining the extension of the Kingdom of Heaven, but that just as surely as the seed is the Word and the field is the world, so within that sphere opposed to the King and the Kingdom is an active Enemy, busy in sowing and propagating antagonistic principles in the very area sown by the good seed, and in such close relationship that the rooting up of the one would endanger the other.

Contrary to the theory of many excellent men our Lord clearly indicates that the mixed conditions introduced through the unwatchfulness of his disciples, and the cunning craftiness of a great enemy, were to continue until the harvest which he says, as translated in the King James version, is "the end of the world," but more correctly rendered in the margin of the Revision, "the consummation

of the age," when he would entrust to angel hands the separation of wheat and tares.

In the second parable He changes the figures slightly when in place of the good seed being the Word he says, "the good seed, these are the sons of the Kingdom, while the tares are the sons of the evil one." Matt. 13: 38, 39. Thus He passes on the responsibility which He had exercised as the great Sower to the personal propagation of everyone receiving the good seed into their hearts.

Then, lest the disciples might be discouraged by the paucity of the results in the first parable and the antagonism revealed in the second, our Lord encourages them by two others.

First he says that the Kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field, or as Luke records it, "in his own garden." This is no enemy work, as some would have us believe. Our Lord selects the illustration to set forth the marvellous expansive power in the principles of the Kingdom. One has only to study that expansiveness in the Apostolic days, and read the statement of the Apostle Paul in Rom. 15: 19 and Col. 1: 6 and the history in the book of Acts, together with the known expansion in the first 150 years of the Church's life to see that it is not necessary to lay hold of Constantine the Great and use him with

his introduction of State-Churchism as the mustard seed. Our Lord's own use elsewhere of the grain of mustard seed as his illustration of the expansive, expulsive power of faith (Matt. 17: 20), the smallness of the seed and yet the greatness of its power surely warrants us in being slow to accept an interpretation foreign to the true Kingdom of Heaven.

And then in the following parable we have the same hesitancy in accepting an interpretation that is incongruous with the simple statement of our Lord, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven."

To make the woman using the leaven the Papacy, and the leaven its false doctrine, on the ground that leaven is always a type of evil, is going beyond the warrant in parabolic figures.

We are not anxious to dispute the fact that leaven is used in the Old Testament in connection with the Passover and the sacrifices to typify evil. And that Paul thus uses it in 1 Corinthians 5: 6-8. And that our Lord so uses it in Matthew 16: 12.

But that that is the only sense in which it can be used illustratively we question. Certainly in Leviticus 23: 17 they were instructed to use leaven in connection with the wave-loaves which were to be made of fine flour, baken with leaven for first fruits unto the Lord.

And in the passage before us there is nothing to indicate that our Lord had in mind ought else in connection with the leaven other than its permeating power.

The leaven which Christ said the Kingdom of Heaven was like unto has so permeated the nations of the world that while they ignore heaven's King they have been compelled to submit to certain principles of the Kingdom of Heaven.

As we move into the closing period of the age when the kings shall set themselves together against the Lord and His Anointed, when Satan shall possess the Antichrist as he heads up all in the mystery of Lawlessness; then just as Russia has sought to bring the whole nation into an attitude of Anti-God and Hitler is now engaged in his move to eradicate all connection with everything Jewish, and will not tolerate a book with the story of One on the Cross with the inscription "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews"; so Antichrist will seek to eliminate everything that has to do with the Kingdom of Heaven, and there will be much elimination to be done: then will come the final struggle of the age.

The next two parables afford just as much scope for diversity of interpretation as the two just considered.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field: which a man

found and hid: and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field." Matt. 13: 44.

Again, "the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls: and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

In the first the emphasis is upon the treasure sought while in the second it is upon the seeker of the treasure. Is the seeker the same in both and is it the same treasure under two figures. There are those who see in the one treasure Israel while in the other the Church.

In the one the seeker of the treasure buys the whole field that he may possess its treasure. In the other at the same cost he just purchases the precious thing desired.

One thing is certain, that Christ paid the redemption price of the whole world field that He might possess His Church. 1 Tim. 2: 3-6; 4: 10.

It is equally true that Christ in a peculiar way loved the Church and gave Himself for it. Eph. 5: 25.

But there are those who see in the Kingdom of Heaven hidden treasure that calls for the giving up of all, that they may possess and enjoy it. And they see in Christ the pearl of great price.

While to some such an application seems to run contrary to their doctrine of grace, they are led to passages that seem to call for the renunciation of all in order that they may enjoy the treasures of the Kingdom.

Not only did Christ challenge the rich young ruler to sell all that he had that he might have treasure in heaven, but Christ challenged the renouncing of all in order to undertake discipleship everywhere. Luke 14: 33. Peter said (in Matt. 19: 27), "Lo, we have left all and followed thee." Then Luke says of Matthew himself that "he forsook all and followed him." Luke 5: 27, 28.

The freeness of Grace is one thing: the cost of discipleship and treasure in the Kingdom is another.

When it comes to buying our way into the Kingdom we are all so utterly bankrupt, with no assets, that the situation is hopeless.

But as pardoned sinners, forgiven much, loving much, the call to sacrificial service is instant and absolute in its demands. And when we realise that we have "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1: 7), the truly pardoned soul can scarcely do ought else than forsake all to follow Him.

And what is the value of our fishing boats,

our business interests, our earthly possessions, compared with the treasures of the Kingdom.

But the closing illustration of our Lord leads us once more to the consummation of the age. Our Lord spans the whole period of the Church and the Kingdom.

The parable of the dragnet gives us the picture of the angels at work making the final separation, not seven years, or three and a half years from the end of the age, but actually at the consummation, at the end of the age the severance comes. It is the resurrection that Christ put "in the last hour" that differentiates. It brings together the living and the dead saints in one vast host, under the leadership of the heavenly Lord, led too by the Archangel and the angel host that descends to overwhelm Satan and the Antichrist and the hosts of wickedness, to bend them and to cast them into their abode in the Abyss—to "gather out of his Kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire." Matt. 13: 41, 42, 49, 50.

"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Matt. 13: 43.

Then, and not until then!

"This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. The rest of the dead lived not until the

thousand years should be finished." Rev. 20: 4-6. And that first resurrection is here seen, not before the coming of the Antichrist, but at the conclusion of his reign as that resurrection, that first resurrection is said to embody those who were beheaded by him, and the multitude that refused to receive his mark upon forehead or hand. They lived and reigned with Christ. Rev. 20: 4.

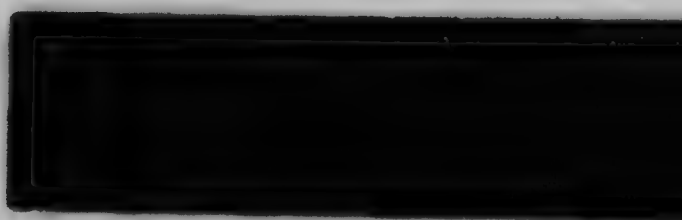
Two questions arise from this chapter and the corresponding scene in Revelation 19 and 20.

Does the separation between the wheat and the tares, between the good fish and the bad, between the evil and the good, between the sons of the Kingdom and the sons of the evil one take place at the consummation of the age, at the end, and by angel hands, whose trumpet call is to summon the saints to resurrection?

Does John confirm Matthew in this when he describes those who partake of the FIRST RESURRECTION not only as blessed and holy, but enumerated among them those that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the Word of God, and such as worshipped not the Beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hands?

If those who were faithful on earth during the reign of the Antichrist were included in

the First Resurrection, and were rewarded by a place on the Throne, then that first resurrection and the reward day could not have taken place prior to the coming and reign of Antichrist, but at its close.



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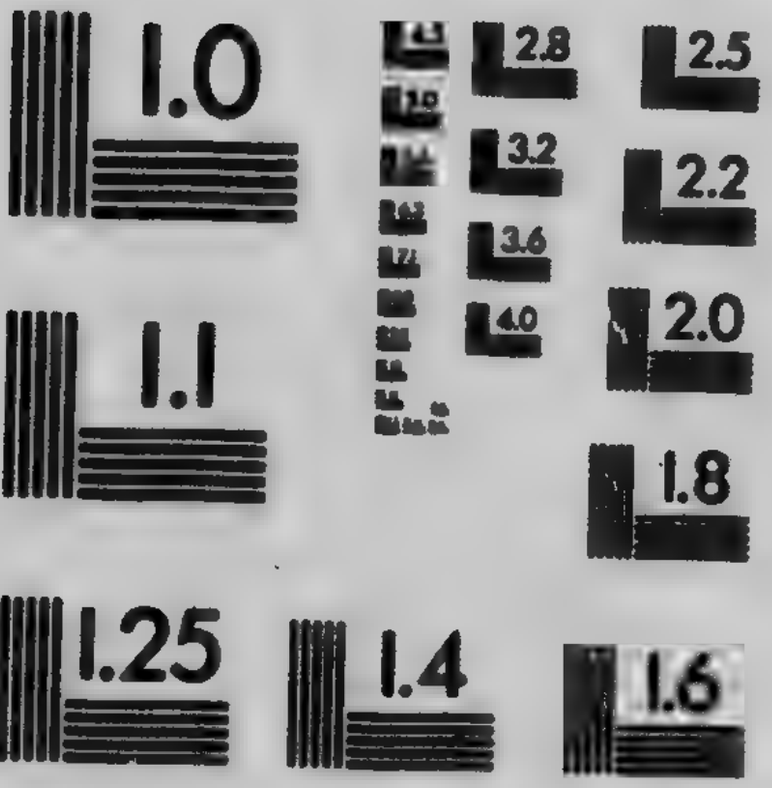

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CHAPTER VIII

CHRIST'S RED LIGHT WARNING TO THE CHURCH

BEWARE of the LEAVEN of the PHARISEES and the SADDUCEES. Matt. 16: 5-12.

ONLY once did our Lord use that solemn word, BEWARE! He used it as a red light warning to save us from the two major dangers of the Church. But the disciples, instead of being where they could grasp the lesson that He was anxious to teach them, were living in the temporalities rather than in the Spiritualities.

His chiding word, "O ye of little faith," which He for the fourth time applied to them, was based upon a two-fold charge:

I. Lack of Perception—"do ye not yet perceive."

II. Lack of Remembrance—"neither remember."

As He pronounced the warning word, they said that it was because they had no bread. Mark tells that they had one loaf or bun in the boat, and there were a dozen men with the appetites of fishermen.

But lack of perception and lack of memory ever go with little faith. When the Psalmist exhorts to faith he links it with perception and memory as in the Revised Version it is rendered:

> "Trust in the Lord and do good
> Dwell in the Land, and 'feed on
> His faithfulness.'" Psa. 37.

One cannot feed on His faithfulness without the exercise of memory in recalling the many occasions of the divine intervention.

David practised this precept when he assayed to go out against Goliath. He remembered that the lion and the bear had attacked his flock and going out against them in the name of the Lord they had been delivered into his hand: and with the memory of this he could say in faith, "He will deliver this uncircumcised Philistine into my hand."

Had the disciples practised this on this occasion they would have remembered what He had to recall to them.

They would have looked at that one loaf which Mark says they had in the boat and have said, "We saw him feed five thousand on five buns—how many could he feed on one? And if we saw him use seven loaves to feed four thousand, even at that rate one would feed over 500 and yet leave enough over to sink our ship."

All they needed was perception and memory to create faith. And all they needed was Christ in the vessel to assure them that every need must be met. And what more do we need?

And so He chided them and reminded them until dull and dense as they were they perceived.

Then He repeats the warning. "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."

And what is the "leaven of the Pharisees" Who were they? What were they?

1. *They claimed to be fundamentalists.* So extreme were they that they counted the jots and the tittles—the very dotting of the i's and the crossing of the t's, in their Bibles. But their comments on the Scriptures they read into the text, and made their interpretations of the Word more important than the Word itself. Christ arraigned them for this when He said, "Ye make void the Word of God through your traditions." See Matt. 23: 16-22.

2. *They were ritualists and externalists in religion.* They did everything "to be seen of men," prayed, fasted, gave alms, all with men and not God in mind. Was there sarcasm in our Lord's description of the Pharisee and the publican going up to the temple to pray as He described the first when he said "The

Pharisee prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank thee.'" Luke 18: 11, R.V. Christ charged them with cleansing the outside of the platter while within they were full from extortion and excess. Matt. 23: 25.

3. *They magnified the minutæ and minimised the essential.*

They made a great fuss over tithing the mint and other herbs while leaving undone the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith. Matt. 23: 23.

4. *They were hypocrites,* professing but not possessing. Christ had bidden some to go to these Pharisees sitting on Moses' seat with "all things whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe, but do not ye after their works, for they say and do not. They bind heavy burdens on men's shoulders . . . but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers." Matt. 23: 4.

He charged them in their hypocrisy with "shutting the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to enter." Matt. 23: 13, 14.

And then He becomes more scathing as He says, "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and ye make him twofold more a son of hell than yourselves." Matt. 23: 15.

The leaven of the Pharisee still works.

And what is the leaven of the Sadducee?

1. *The Sadducee is the Rationalist* as truly as the Pharisee is the Ritualist.

He did not believe the Scriptures as the word of God and Christ's charge to them was that they knew not the Scriptures nor the Power of God. Matt. 22: 29.

The Sadducee did not believe in angel or spirit and denied the resurrection. Acts 23: 8.

They believed in making the best of this world and so sought to enter into politics with the Herodians.

They correspond to the modernists in our midst to-day who talk about saving the community and the State but know nothing of the divine power to save a soul.

Beware of the leaven of the Pharisee and the Sadducee.

Meet them both with a living Christ and the living Word of God and they will likely join hands to crucify you. But let it be known that the shallow superficiality of the Pharisee and his religion, and the cold deadness of the Sadducee, are no evidence that there is not a vital godliness possible to those who will have faith in, and will follow Jesus.

While we recognize the red light danger signal of Christ in His warning against these twin evils, let us use our strength not in

declamation of them, but in the presentation and proclamation of the living Christ.

The lame man past whom the Pharisees and Sadducees had walked on their daily visit to the temple, healed in the Name of Jesus, did more to confuse and confound them than any theological denunciation could have done. Demonstrate that Jesus Christ still saves to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him and these religious leaders, these blind guides, will be able to prevail nothing against the working of an almighty Saviour.

CHAPTER IX

MATTHEW AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

One of the marvels of the four Gospels and pre-eminently that of Matthew, is the way in which the position of the witness is maintained throughout.

A witness tells what he knows, and testifies that he has seen. He deals only with things relevant to the issue. Opinions are not expressed, and theories or explanations are not suggested.

When Matthew wrote his Gospel he had already been preaching for many years. And yet he never sermonizes in his narrative concerning the Christ. There are no explanations or dissertations interjected at his favourite points.

In no place is that more apparent than at the recital of our Lord's institution of His sacred supper. These Gospel writers long years after the Church was formed, when they had seen it actively functioning in all its appointments and ordinances, recite the story of that last night before the crucifixion without any embellishment and without any explanations.

Three of them in less than a dozen brief sentences each tell the full story of the institution of this sacred memorial feast. While John,

last of all the writers, omits reference to it altogether, telling instead the story of how our Lord on the same occasion undertook to teach another deep spiritual lesson by washing the disciples' feet.

Had it been aught else than that which is indicated in the narrative, a simple symbolic memorial feast to be observed anywhere, at any time, by any group of His disciples gathered in His Name, surely they would have indicated it here as they told the story.

They could have "fenced the table" with their Apostolic authority, and passed on the prerogatives in a clearly defined "Apostolic succession." But no hint of it occurs.

Had the thought of the Romanist entered into it surely there would have been some guiding word to have established their theory of "transubstantiation" beyond a doubt.

Linked with the teaching which John records in a connection altogether separated from this supper they knew that Christ was talking and teaching in symbolic language when He said, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." John 6: 35. And when He continued, "I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever: yea, and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world." John 6: 51.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6: 53, 54.

To any that were blind to the language of symbolism there was nothing else to do but to say, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?"

But to do what Rome has done, in first introducing a priestly cult to preside at the communion feast, and then, ignoring the symbolism of the language, to constitute themselves as miracle workers in claiming ability to transform the elements of a symbol into deity is an outrage on the figures of the Scripture only equalled by their audacity in withholding altogether one of the elements of the sacred feast from the people, as the priest hands out the "wafer-god" of his creation, and then stands and consumes himself the whole of the wine. It is a travesty of the simple memorial feast instituted by our Lord, and recorded by Matthew and the two other evangelists in their Gospel.

That the simplicity of its institution was continually to mark its celebration is evident from the record of the Acts of the Apostles, where it is referred to under no high sounding ritualistic phrase, but in a very incidental way,

where it says that the early Church "continued steadfastly in the Apostles teaching and fellowship, *in the breaking of bread* and the prayers." Acts 2: 42.

And if the reference almost immediately after has the same feast in mind it tells us that "day by day continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and *breaking bread at* home" (ver. 46) it would seem to indicate that it was divested even of the associations of temple and synagogue and lifted from all ecclesiasticism kept as a memorial feast in any home where as on the Emmaus walk Christ had become a guest.

Nowhere else in all the Acts of the Apostles is the observance of the feast even referred to except on the one occasion in Paul's life (Acts 20: 7) where we read that "Upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them intending to depart on the morrow."

Some have seized upon this solitary instance to imply that it was a weekly feast, and to infer that the failure to so observe it is a breach of Apostolic practise. While there is nothing in the Scriptures to hinder daily, weekly or annual observance of the feast either in the story of its institution or in Apostolic practice or teaching there is nothing that enjoins any specific time. It behoves Christians, therefore,

in this time sphere instead of adopting an air of superiority or Apostolicity to frankly avow as to the frequency of their observance of the feast "our custom is."

The rightful position of this Christian feast in the Church can be adjudged not only by the simplicity of the Gospel narrative, its observance as recorded in the Acts, but also by the place it holds in the Apostolic writings and teaching.

In all the epistles of Jude and James and John, in both the letters of Peter, in twelve out of the thirteen epistles of Paul no mention is made of the sacred feast.

In Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians he refers three times to the Lord's supper, in one of which he claims special revelation from the Lord concerning this Christian feast.

In the first mention he links the symbolism of the new covenant institution with the type of the old when he says, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5: 6-8), but the figure of the old which he stresses in the new is not that of an *annual* observance as practised by some, but the keeping of the feast with unleavened bread, the part of the symbolism almost universally forgotten and ignored by Christians of all denominations.

While the question of whether we use leavened or unleavened bread may to us not

affect the validity of our enjoyment of the feast it does make or mar its symbolism—and it may affect our practice. No one can miss the spiritual truth here taught, that in coming to the feast we should purge out from our lives the "leaven of malice and wickedness" and keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

In his next dissertation on the feast the Apostle enjoins separation. 1 Cor. 10: 14-22. The believer cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils. To be in communion with the Lord as set forth in this feast we must break communion with those who know Him not.

Then in the revelation which he says he received of the Lord concerning the sacred supper Paul almost repeats the words recorded by Matthew. 1 Cor. 11: 20-30. His additions to the narrative enjoin us to come to the feast examining or judging ourselves. Many have made the Lord's table the place of examining others. Paul says, "Examine yourselves." This is profitable. And then he bids us discern the Lord's body—not only that we partake of it very specially by faith. But further that the whole Church is His body, and that our inter-relationship as members of His body should be discerned and ever strengthened at the table where we all partake of the one loaf.

Nothing following the Gospel records adds ought to change the character of this sweet memorial feast, and only human and carnal additions have marred its simplicity or robbed it as a place of testimony that true believers are all one in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER X

THE SUPREME PROPHET AND HIS PROPHECIES

THE importance of Christ's prophecies according to Matthew have undergone the same nullifying processes as the rest of the book.

Such assertions as that the prophecies of this book are Jewish and therefore not for the Church are commonly affirmed. Then, too, we are informed that the Church has nothing to do with signs—signs are for Israel. Further, we are told that right from the beginning of the age the Church was to be looking momentarily for the return of the Lord: that every Christian should have a moment by moment expectancy of the Lord's return. Again, these interpreters inform us that there are no prophecies for the Church. We have heard them repeatedly affirm, "When Israel was set aside 'the prophetic clock stopped.'"

Did our Lord's prophetic utterances cover the whole of this age,—or have they to do with just a brief terminal period after the Church is caught away? If our Lord has covered the whole age with prophetic utterances, then the whole of the above theories become empty talk. If He has lifted the veil of the future and

indicated the whole course of things through this age, then He has done it for the Church. Then, surely those words that Peter specifically wrote, "to them who have obtained a like precious faith with us," when he says, "We have the sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place," did not imply that we carried an unlighted torch in our hand, but that these prophecies embody the things which we should study for light upon our own path. Is it sane or reasonable that all Christ's prophetic writings in the Gospels, and all the prophetic utterances of the book of Revelation should be given for a "Jewish remnant" who will only need it for a period of three-and-one-half years, and leave the course of the Church uncharted for 2,000 years? Why should I trouble myself about prophetic study or worry myself about symbolic forecasts that I know will not be fulfilled until I am taken out of the world?

The Church was surely constituted in A.D. 70, when the Romans surrounded Jerusalem, and when they created in that awful siege such suffering and tribulation as had never been known before in the history of the world, or on such a scale and proportion since. And yet not one Jewish Christian perished in that fearful desolation. And why? Because they believed what Matthew and Luke had written

of the prophetic utterances of Christ, and when they saw Jerusalem compassed with armies they fled as they were taught at the first opportunity, and escaped to Pella on the east side of Jordan.

The prophetic clock of their day was not like the poetic clock of our day, "old grandfather's clock." It had not stopped never to go again. It was needed. And why do these modern interpreters want to stop the prophetic clock? Because it upsets their prophetic theory.

One cannot accept Matthew's teaching and believe in their *secret* rapture, because Matthew bids us *not* to accept the teaching of those who talk of a *secret* coming of Christ. Matt. 24: 24-28.

"As the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west: so shall be the coming (parousia) of the Son of Man."

And these teachers have stressed the fact that the Greek word "parousia" always has to do with the secret rapture, His coming for His saints.

And then their theory of the "immediacy" of the second advent is upset by the long programme that Matthew gives of the age, a programme that has taken nearly two thousand years to unfold.[1]

[1] They were to be watchfully concerned about the coming of the Lord as it was to be the accounting day, the reward day of the Saints. That expectancy of accounting for their stewardship

And Luke confirms Matthew in that he says Christ spake a parable to disabuse the minds of those who "supposed that the Kingdom of God was immediately to appear." Luke 19: 11, R.V. And when that wrong supposition persisted in Paul's day, he sought to correct the error by writing, as rightly rendered in our Revised Version:

"Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming (parousia) of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto him to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit or by word or by Epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is just at hand; let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed." 2 Thess. 2: 1–3.

And the only way the moment by moment theorists can twist out of this positive statement is by making the "day of the Lord" something different to the "coming of the Lord," of which the apostle says here he is specifically writing, and links it with "our gathering together unto Him."

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was to exercise a wholesome influence on their life. But that Paul was expecting the Lord to return every moment he denies. He certainly knew in Jerusalem that he was to live to reach Rome. Acts 23 : 11. Peter knew he was to die before the Lord came. John 21 : 18, 19. The disciples certainly knew that the Temple was to be destroyed before that day. The Lord who had entrusted them with his talents was to return after a long time.

It was in response to Christ's affirmation concerning the temple, that not one stone should be left upon another that should not be cast down, that the disciples presented their question, "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming (parousia) and of the end of the age?" Matt. 24: 3.

And no one could listen to those words of his reply and affirm that He intended those disciples who saw Him ascend to heaven only a few weeks later to go around ever after saying, "He may come to-day."

As He outlined the political plan, and the ecclesiastical plan, and then the Church programme, together with the cosmic upheaval, he gave them not the happenings of a brief lifetime, but the grand programme of an age.

And to the Church He gave a specific sign of the Advent, to inspire them to persistent, hopeful activity, when He declared:

"This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations: and then shall the end come." Matt. 24: 30.

Not gazing up into heaven, but going out into all the world, was the intent of the "blessed hope."

And not until the modern awakening of the Church to the great task of world evangelism to be accomplished ere our Lord returned, came the interjection of a theory that has

grown bolder as it has been permitted to go unchallenged, that affirms that the "Gospel of the Kingdom" of Matthew 24: 30 is not the Gospel for the Church to proclaim, and therefore not THE GOSPEL in the parallel passage in Mark 13: 10.

And growing still bolder in their obsession, several very eminent leaders, whose ministry to the Church apart from this has been greatly blessed, have ventured to declare that "the great commission is not for the Church," and instead of urging the Church on to the accomplishing of the unfinished task in the strength of the blessed hope, they are throwing the appointed task of the Church over on to a mythical "Jewish remnant" to accomplish in three-and-a-half years after the Church is caught away. They ask us to believe that with an absent Church and a withdrawn Holy Spirit, and without a single regenerate person left on earth with which to start the movement, and confessedly the whole world left behind in greater antagonism to God and His Christ than ever before, that this "Jewish remnant," how created or how originated no one knows, are to accomplish more in three-and-a-half years in giving the Gospel to the world than in the whole 2,000 years of a witnessing Church empowered by the presence of the Holy Spirit. And they would tell us that the greatest spiritual harvest of the age, when the innumer-

able company of blood-washed ones gathered from all nations come up "*out of the great tribulation*" to heaven, that they are the fruit of the labours of this so-called "Jewish remnant" rather than the closing harvest and the glorious consummation of the Church's work on earth. And to rob the Church of participation in the greatest revival of the age, these people hold up their hands in horror at the thought of the Church being on earth in "the great tribulation."

One would think that tribulation was something incongruous with the Christian experience. You would think the words of our Lord, "In the world ye shall have tribulation . . . but be of good cheer for I have overcome the world," should not have been uttered. What has been the experience of the Church through the age? Has she escaped tribulation?

Those who suffered martyrdom under old Pagan Rome reddened the earth with their blood, as far as the iron rule of the Caesars reached. And when Papal Rome succeeded, the cruel hand of the Inquisition reached out to the utmost bounds of Christendom, and by the most diabolical cruelties crushed out the lives of those who refused to bow to the authority of the Pope, until the toll ran into the million.

In our own day, thousands in Armenia, Korea and elsewhere, and at present in Russia,

have suffered unspeakable agony because they refused to deny the Lord that bought them. Who and what are we, that exemption from suffering should be accorded us? Paul thought he was handing out a privilege when he wrote Philippian converts, "to you it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer in His behalf." Phil. 1: 29.

And so these interpreters of the easy way object to Matthew's record of Christ's prophetic utterance being applied to the Church, because forsooth that twenty-fourth chapter makes clear where the great tribulation comes in, and also where the resurrection comes in.

They charge us with putting the great tribulation between us and the blessed hope of Christ's coming and the resurrection of the Saints. And we answer, No! We do not place it there, but Christ taught Matthew and the rest of the disciples the order of the events, when after He said,

"then shall be great tribulation such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be" (Verse 21).

He proceeds to say,

"except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Verse 22)

and then follows the warning against being misled with the idea of a secret coming of Christ (verses 25-27), and following that, the specific statement

> "immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened . . . and the powers of heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man coming in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Verses 29–31)

and Mark puts it "from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven." If the angel gathering of the elect[1] (eklektous) from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven is not the resurrection of the saints, than which there is no other resurrection for a thousand years (Rev. 20: 1-6), then we frankly confess that all prophetic interpretation is impossible.

Matthew had referred to that angel gathering of the saints in the thirteenth chapter again and again, verses 30, 39, 43, 49, as the harvest at the end of the age, stating emphatically

[1] The Greek word for the Church is "Eklesia", and the natural way of referring to its members would be as Christ does here, to call them "eklektous."

"the reapers are the angels." And it harmonizes perfectly with all the other Scriptures bearing upon the coming of the Lord and the resurrection. Paul's statement that "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God" (1 Thess. 4: 16) fits in perfectly with Matthew's statement "The Son of Man coming . . . with power and great glory—and he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet." Matt. 24: 30, 31.

Then it is Paul who locates that Resurrection as at the last trump (1 Cor. 15: 52) as Christ had previously located it "at the last day," four times repeated. John 6: 39, 40, 44, 54.

And this time and event fits in perfectly with the words in the Revelation of Jesus Christ, where in Chapter 10 John sees, as Paul had seen, a "strong angel coming down out of heaven, arrayed with a cloud . . . his face as the sun . . . who swears that "there shall be delay no longer, but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God." Rev. 10: 6, 7, R.V.

Further, when that seventh angel actually sounds, we read:

"We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast; because thou hast taken thy great power, and didst reign. And the nations were

wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to thy servants the pr .ets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name . . . and to destroy them that destroy the earth."

All this is as the seventh angel sounded, and the word goes forth from heaven: "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ: and He shall reign for ever and ever."

And why set Matthew aside in his prophetic testimony as he harmonizes with Paul in prophecy and finds confirmation in the last Revelation which Jesus Christ gave to John from heaven? Because it upsets the theory of interpretation of that book.

Once again, that book that was given and intended to be a prophetic lamp and a guide book and comfort for the Church is set down as "Jewish" and the whole prophetic part of the book from the fourth chapter to the nineteenth is to cover the seven years of Daniel, and therefore relates only to this "Jewish remnant" who are to function after the Church is caught away.

And the noble army of martyrs, who in their agonizing suffering took comfort from this book because it showed that their Christ had revealed beforehand the whole story of pagan persecution, and then with words and vision so clear and plain the picture of the Papal

power, reigning in the city of seven hills, and riding the secular power, and holding in her hand the cup by which she became drunk with the blood of the saints—they were all mistaken? This will all happen after the Church is caught away?

But just take this last book of the New Testament as we have taken the first one as written for Christians, for the Church and for simple people, and see what we find.

First, Christ appears to his beloved disciple, John, in a glory that he says caused him to fall at His feet as one dead. Rev. 1: 17. Then Christ "laid His right hand upon me, saying: Fear not, I am the first and the last and the Living One: and I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore: and I have the keys of death and of Hades." Verse 18.

Then, following the Revelation, to John came his commission in three tenses.

"Write therefore the things which thou sawest: and the things which are: and *the things which shall come to pass hereafter.*" Rev. 1: 19.

It is so simple. He was first to write what he had already seen—the vision of the glorified Christ. Then he was given a present commission, to write to seven Churches of Asia who had present existence and present problems. Then he was to write prophecy, the

things which were to follow his present dealing with these Churches.

That there might be no mistake about this tense division, no sooner had John written down in Chapter One the things which he saw in the past, and had fulfilled his present obligation in writing to the seven Churches of Asia, than he makes the time division by saying:

"After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice that I heard, a voice as of a trumpet speaking with me, one saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee *the things which must come to pass* hereafter." Rev. 4: 1.

There is no question that the prophetic part was to commence right at this point where he quotes the exact words given in the third clause of his three-fold commission. But discarding this simple self-evident interpretation, and led by a Jesuit priest, Riberi, who was deputed to turn the attack of the Reformers who pointed to the picture of the scarlet-robed woman, and said, "There is papal Rome," they have accepted his interpretation which made an entirely different division.

They tell us that the "things that are" cover the whole age—two thousand years of future history: that these seven Churches are seven periods of time, each covering a characteristic portion of Church history from John's day until the second advent.

We are informed that which no one would ever see or even dream, that when John was called to "Come up hither" that was the point where the Church was resurrected and translated: and that all succeeding that, records transactions following what they term the "Rapture" or translation of the saints.

And when it comes to stretching the seven Churches over nineteen hundred years, a jigsaw puzzle isn't in it in the effort to make the pieces fit. It used to be that the whole seven were in sequence—but the last effort to make things work right is to say that the last three are contemporary. That was because with the other arrangement the Church of Sardis would always strike the Reformation, and it was hard to make Tyndall and Luther, and Calvin and Knox, all join the Church that had "a name to live and was dead."

There is no doubt that in selecting the seven Churches of Asia our Lord took seven typical Churches: that his letters showed the divine prescience as to their coming history. The two to whom the word "repent" was not addressed continued with unbroken history right down to our time. Laodicea, unrepentant, was spued out of the mouth of the Almighty long years ago. The idea that now we are in the last Church or Laodicean period, and therefore that "neither cold nor hot" must characterize the whole Church universally

in the last days, is the gloomiest, most pessimistic theory conceivable, and utterly paralyzing to faith. But in any of our large cities to-day you can find any one of these Churches reproduced.

There are very many things in that section of the book of Revelations after Chapter Four that we do not yet understand—but we know they began to happen in John's day—and we are quite sure they have been happening through all the days since.

From the time that the wonderful Rider set out on His white horse, conquering and to conquer, at the beginning of this age, until He returns on the same white horse to the final victory, he has been operating mightily in this world through and for His church. When we hear it stated so glibly that the Church isn't mentioned from the fourth to the nineteenth chapter, we would answer that it isn't mentioned before or after. Seven Churches are mentioned.

It is just as fallacious to say that "grace" is not mentioned by John in his Gospel after the first chapter and therefore in John's Gospel "grace" does not thereafter appear. Or, to make a more sweeping statement, John does not mention "the Gospel" once, and therefore we must not look for the Gospel in John.

No Church in Revelation? Who are the saints with whom the harlot Church is drunk?

Are they not in the true Church? Who is the Bride, the Lamb's wife? She is not called the Church. Who are the host that will not bear the mark of the beast? Who are the two "Witnesses" if they are not in the Church? And what company is that multitude whom no man can number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb arrayed in white robes, crying with a great voice, "Salvation unto our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Do they belong to the "Church of the first-born," or to the "Jewish remnant" Church? Whoever they are, it would be better to be a member of that company, even if you were beheaded for Christ's sake in the great tribulation, than be a member in good standing of the Laodicean Church and escape the great tribulation because of your lukewarmness.

The Church isn't seen in the Revelation? Then, surely you must be in the Church of Laodicea, and need the exhortation there to "anoint thine eyes with eye salve that thou mayest see." We say this earnestly and not with sarcasm.

Because Peter does not mention the Church in either of his epistles, does he not address the Church when he writes to those "who have obtained a like precious faith with us in

the righteousness of our God and the Saviour Jesus Christ!" 2 Pet. 1: 1.

And the blood-washed ones can be seen everywhere fighting the hosts of darkness right through Revelation from the time they begin to sing "Unto Him that loved us and loosed us from our sins in His blood," in Chapter One, until in the closing words of this book she responds to His last ringing cheer, "I come quickly," with her word of welcome, "Come, Lord Jesus," and then either He or John add the words, "The Grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints. Amen"—the Church is there. And the Church is in Matthew, and retains for her guidance the prophetic word which will be her light in the darkest night of the world that ushers in her most glorious day. In the great tribulation she knows that her heavenly Lord is watching her and cutting short her days—how many she does not know. She knows that when the wrath of God is outpoured He seals and separates His saints in the operation of these plagues, so that they fall on "only such men as have not the Seal of God on their foreheads." Rev. 9: 4; 16: 2. He is still guarding His own and saying "Thus far shalt thou go," when Satan's wrath would wipe out the seed of faith who hold the testimony of Jesus. (Rev. 12: 16, 17.) The universal reign of the Antichrist will have an innumerable company who will refuse to

recognise his sway or bear his mark. Rev. 13: 8-10; 14: 12, 13. Satan is not depicted as having it all his own way during the brief period of Antichrist's reign. Rev. 15: 2. During this whole period a faithful Church aided by Angelic helpers will continue the proclamation of a saving message with wonderful results. Rev. 7: 9; 14: 6, 7; 18: 4, 5. And all through she is spurred on and buoyed up by the blessed hope, knowing that "yet a very little while, He that cometh shall come." Heb. 10: 37, R.V.

CHAPTER XI

THE GREAT COMMISSION TO THE CHURCH

THERE can be no conclusion of the Gospel of Matthew without the consideration of that which has been by universal consent of the Church called the Great Commission. Termed by the Iron Duke the "Marching Orders of the Church" no one has thought until recent years of questioning its authority even though they neglected its injunction.

During recent years, following each other in a system of interpretation that has found the admission of the application of these verses upsetting to their theory, a number of good men have openly stated that "the great commission" is not for the Church, but is to come into operation after the Church has been translated, when this "Jewish remnant" will execute its commands. But with Matthew 28: 16-20 before us, let us consider its text and terms.

I. THE PLACE. Verse 16.

There we read "the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus

had appointed them." There is no question about this appointed place. It had been referred to too often to leave any doubt in mind that our Lord had particularly and peculiarly selected the place of his post-resurrection meeting. "After I am raised up," he had said, "I will go before you into Galilee." Matt. 26: 32. To the two Marys by the open tomb, the shining one whose appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow had said, "Go quickly and tell His disciples, He is risen from the dead: lo, He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him. Matt. 28: 7. Then we are told that Jesus Himself met these women and reiterated the words of the angel as He said, "Fear not: go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me." Matt. 28: 10.

There was no question about the place of the appointment. Those disciples knew it right well. Just where he had laid down the laws of His Kingdom in His opening sermon, there He would meet them to plan for its propagation.

Just as definitely as Matthew cites the place where Christ commenced His ministry at "Galilee of the Gentiles," just as definitely does he make this "Galilee appointment" as though to smash once and for ever the idea of His Mission and His Message being simply a Jewish one.

He met them in Jerusalem afterward and ascended from the Mount of Olives. But it is significant that the two men in white, who appeared as the clouds hid Him from their view, addressed the groups of wondering disciples as "Ye men of Galilee." So "Galilee of the Gentiles," the place of appointment for the giving of the Great Commission, sweeps aside all thought of nationalising its application. The geography of the Great Commission is most significant.

II. The Persons.

At the centre of those meetings at the appointment of Jesus were these eleven men, disciples, and men of Galilee. They had already entered into His Kingdom and for forty days were to be instructed that they might preach the Gospel of the Kingdom. They were not only in His Kingdom, but they were the foundation stones of His Church. There were others there. We are quite sure that the two Marys were here. If this was the occasion of which Paul spoke when he said He appeared to above 500 brethren at once, we are quite confident that there were as many or more women there. And they were all there representative of the Church. While the day had not yet come in which they were all baptized by one Spirit into one body,

constitutionally they were here present as for forty days Christ unfolded to them the things of the heavenly Kingdom and entrusted them with its constitution.

III. The Proclamation.

No longer does He withhold His glory. Now He proclaims it in the most tremendous claim that ever came from one in the likeness of man, as He affirms, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." Verse 18. No injunction was ever preceded by such an affirmation. And written as this Gospel was, long years after these words were heard by Matthew, no one would ever have written such words concerning a mere man. They surely had reason to give him the place which this claim challenged. But how artless is the record here, "Some worshipped, but some doubted." If Matthew were an advocate and not a witness he would have omitted those words from the narrative. Some doubted. Doubted when they could see the print of the nails in His hands. How our doubts persist until He conquers.

IV. The Positive Command.

"Go ye, therefore, and make dis··les of all the nations." Verse 19. There is no doubt as

to the scope of His commission. "All the world" and "all the nations" leave no bound to the sphere of the Church's activities. No one can believe in Christ and be narrow and insular in their interests.

No true disciple can isolate himself from the worldwide call. "All the nations" must come into the sphere of our love and interest as they came into the scope of His redemption.

And the commission which He gave is a positive command. There is no denying its clear application to His disciples. The "go ye" cannot be evaded by any that are honest in their desire to understand. It challenges and requires but one thing—obedience. Only the disobedience of the Church has hindered its full accomplishment long since. Shall we not obey and finish the task in our day.

V. The Process of Accomplishment.

The process is indicated as threefold.

Preach in order to the making of disciples.

Baptize on their confession of their faith. And right here there are those who maintain that the Great Commission is Jewish and not for the Church who in consequence argue that baptism is Jewish and not for the Church. In this they are logical if their first premise is right. But they have started off with a wrong presumption and it has led to a theological fog.

And TEACH them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

This last clause smashes the whole idea of localizing the teaching of Christ in his earthly ministry within Jewish confines. He commissions these disciples to go to all the nations not with something special that He was afterward to reveal to Paul, but with the teaching He had given them during the years of His earthly ministry while with them, and they were to place this as authoritative upon all the nations.

VI. The Promise of Accompaniment.

That "Lo I am with you alway even unto the end of the age" is not only the assurance of the Presence as the one great word of comfort and strength to all the saints who obey Him, but it reaches right down from the time of the promise until the age ends.

To throw over such a stupendous promise to find its realisation by a little Jewish remnant for a brief period of three and a half years is simply preposterous. It was intended to assure what the Church has always believed it taught, that the One who during this age ever lives to intercede at the right hand of the Father, sent His Holy Spirit to make His person and His presence real to every one of His obedient followers. And all through the centuries the

missionary in every land has clung to this promise and found it real.

VII. The Prospect of Attainment.

That Christ intended the Church in obedience to this command to evangelize the world there is no doubt. He had already indicated that the proclamation of the Gospel to all nations was to be the sure mark of His second advent. "This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all the nations, and then shall the end be."

Had the Church walked in obedience it would have been accomplished long since.

But in our own day there has been a revival not only of the blessed Hope but of the missionary task which is preliminary to its realisation. The Student Volunteer Movement took as its motto forty years ago, "The Evangelisation of the World in this generation." And the accomplishments of the Church in this generation have been tremendous.

The last century opened with only one continent even measurably touched with the Gospel. Its nations with their polyglot tongues had scarcely any Scriptures in their many languages. The missionary body of all the existing Societies would not number a hundred, and there was hardly a native preacher to aid this little force.

The greatest nations of the earth in Asia were almost totally unreached.

To-day there are very few countries in the five continents that do not have a splendid body of missionaries working in their midst. There is scarcely a language spoken by a million people that has not some portion of the Scriptures in their tongue. Certainly now more than three-quarters of the world's population have some portion of the Word of God in their language. The missionaries have grown to the tens of thousands and native pastors and evangelists have increased into the hundred thousand. The finance of 1800 would easily fall below two hundred thousand dollars (£40,000) per year, while in 1929 the reports, which were by no means complete, ran to over forty million dollars (£8,000,000): and even with all the shrinkage of the depression years as late as 1934 the Societies still shewed a missionary income of over forty million dollars or eight million pounds.

We are quite sure that the Church, the living Church, has in its hands ample resources to finish the great task in less than ten years: and men and women could be available to speedily carry the task of the Great Commission through to its glorious consummation. That which the Gospel of Matthew calls for in its closing verses is a return to a simple obedience to Christ, which in itself will

produce such a revival in the Church that the thing that Christ longs for and is "henceforth expecting" would be well nigh immediately accomplished. Then He will keep His promise, "If I go away, I will come again."

The writer has a personal testimony to give to encourage world evangelization.

When with two others he essayed to enter the Sudan in 1893 it was then regarded as the largest totally unevangelized field of the world, as its fifty million people had no missionary witness within its borders.

To-day such has been the advance of the Societies that have since entered that if that advance can be continued for another ten years in the same ratio as in the past decade the Gospel will be readily within reach of the whole vast population.

And that is true of Africa as a whole. Fifty years ago there were not fifty mission stations that had reached beyond fifty miles from the coast. To-day there are two thousand stations inside that same line occupied by white workers: while thousands of trained native pastors and teachers are busy spreading the good news in every direction.

The goal of an evangelized Africa is in sight if the Church will but arise and push the battle for another ten years.

Let us not forget that not only does our Lord in Matthew let us know that world

evangelization is the outstanding sign of His coming, but the later Revelation through John lets us know that the last brief period of travail is to be marked by the greatest ingathering of souls that the Church has witnessed all through this age. While Satan in incarnating himself in the Antichrist will do his worst in his effort to exterminate the Church, the Holy Spirit by a new effusion will empower the Church to do its best.

At the very time when the vine of the earth will have its vintage pressed in the winepress of the wrath of God, the harvest of the true grain will be cut and garnered into the heavenly granary.